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AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND YUGOSLAVIA
FROM 1943 UNTIL 1949.

Thesis
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by

William H. Greiwe
II

Submitted to the
Faculty of the School of International Service
of The American University
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
of
MASTER OF ARTS

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AN ABSTRACT

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September, 1966

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Washington, D. C.

ABSTRACT

The thesis traces the diplomatic history of U. S.-Yugoslav relations from the first United States interest in the Tito-Mihailović crisis during World War II, until the United States agreed to contribute economic aid to Yugoslavia in 1949. The periods covered include the gradual movement of Yugoslavia from British sphere to American sphere through American involvement in the Tito-Šubašić Agreement, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and the Yalta agreements.

Following the end of World War II, diplomatic relations cooled because of the Mihailović and Stepinac trials, the loss of two American aircraft over Yugoslavia, and the Trieste clashes.

When Tito broke with the Cominform in 1948, the United States, it is proposed, developed a sound and lasting policy of assistance toward Yugoslavia that continues today. This policy has been the blueprint for America's Eastern Europe position.

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PREFACE

The continued existence of a communist government in Yugoslavia, a government that has declared for nonalignment, is a contemporary political phenomenon. That this government has existed for almost twenty years independently of Moscow is due to one man, Josip Broz-Tito. That Tito could maintain his declared independence of the Kremlin is due to the United States and the farsighted actions of those men who shape the foreign policy of the United States.

The United States had little interest in Yugoslavia prior to World War II. Since that time, the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the U. S. military aid and advisers who assisted the Yugoslav insurgents, and the inability of Great Britain to maintain her traditional influence in the Balkans all attracted the United States to a more aggressive policy in Yugoslavia. Following the war, Yugoslavia became the symbol of American frustration in Europe, the confrontation with Soviet-propelled communism. Despite these problems, the Department of State always managed to treat Tito and Yugoslavia with a little more care and understanding than the other communist nations. When Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union fell out in 1948, the officials in the Department of State were quick to grasp the full implications and to

develop a new policy that has been both enlightening in its reversal of previous American attitudes toward communism and successful in its attempt at stabilizing Yugoslavia's national independence--free of Soviet domination.

The United States policy toward Yugoslavia has been little publicized, poorly understood, and badly berated by Congress. And yet it stands as the most successful foreign policy that the United States has followed since communism began its spectacular rise. In this thesis, then, the writer has tried to shed some light on how the United States became interested in Yugoslavia, and why the American officials were so eager to aid Yugoslavia on Yugoslavia's terms.

The pursuit of factual information has been limited because the State Department files for the period covered in this thesis are not yet unclassified. According to the Department of State, these files might not be unclassified until well into the 1970's. Still there is enough information available in The New York Times and in the State Department's own publications to provide the factual information needed to construct this thesis. This author's research has revealed that there has never been any significant research done on this particular topic, and even the many memoirs of American statesmen mention the events of United States-Yugoslav relations only in passing.

Yugoslav proper names have received the proper spelling and marking in the body of the paper. The Anglicized versions sometimes appear in quotes and footnotes, e.g., Fotic--Fotitch, Mihailovic--Mihailovitch.

The writer would especially like to thank Mr. Harold Vedeler, former Deputy Under Secretary of State for Eastern European Affairs, whose advice and counsel were invaluable in completing this study.

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED STATES BECOMES INVOLVED IN YUGOSLAV POLITICS

As World War II entered its last years in 1944, one of the more perplexing political problems facing both Great Britain and the United States was the reinstatement of pro-Western governments-in-exile in their liberated homeland, and their support or lack of support by the indigenous population.

In the case of Yugoslavia, both the British and the American governments had given full recognition to the Royal Yugoslav Government, represented in London by King Peter II and many of his former ministers. However, the effective governing force of Yugoslavia was one of the two resistance groups still fighting in Yugoslavia: the Partisans, led by Josip Broz--more commonly known as Tito. Because the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, reached the conclusion that Tito's Partisans were performing far more effectively against the German occupation forces than the other resistance unit, the Četnici,¹ led by

¹The name used by Serb forefathers in their underground battles against the Turks. The Serbian word četa means "company."

General Draža Mihailović (and favored by the Royal Yugoslav Government-in-exile), he attempted to arrange a close collaboration between Tito and the exile government. The greatest stumbling block to this collaboration was that, in November of 1943 at Jajce, Tito had set up a provisional government, claiming sole authority in Yugoslavia and depriving the Royal Yugoslav Government of all its rights. It was at this same meeting of the Anti-fascist Council of National Liberation (AVNOJ) that Tito was declared Marshal of Yugoslavia.

Mr. Churchill felt strongly that: "No irrevocable political decisions about the future regime in Yugoslavia should be made in the atmosphere of occupation, civil war, and 'emigre' politics." The Prime Minister was disturbed not only by the internal bickering of the various ethnic groups within the Royal Yugoslav Government in London but even more by the civil war within a war raging in Yugoslavia itself. The Partisans and the Četnici were spending more time fighting against each other than against the German and Italian forces, and at the cost of thousands of Yugoslav lives. Although the Royal Yugoslav Government feud might be seen as a petty preoccupation with traditional Serb-Croat rivalries, the Partisan-Četnici battles were a direct hindrance to the ultimate Allied military

objective: destruction of the Axis armies on every possible front.²

It was Churchill's decision even as early as the end of 1943 to provide all-out military support to Tito's Partisans as the force who most effectively detained the estimated twenty Axis divisions in the Balkans.³ The reason for his choice of Tito over Mihailović can best be seen in Churchill's military opinion of the two forces. Under the pressure of shocking Nazi reprisals for guerrilla activities:

Mihailović drifted gradually into a posture where some of his commanders made accommodations with the German and Italian troops to be left alone in certain mountain areas in return for doing little or nothing against the enemy.

On the other hand, Churchill estimated that Tito's Partisans "had little to lose but their lives"; and retaliation was not a weapon the Germans could effectively use against such a force.⁴ As reconciliation between Tito and Mihailović seemed hopeless, Churchill wanted to have the

²Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), Vol. V, "Closing the Ring," p. 467.

³Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Tito and Goliath (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), p. 29.

⁴Churchill, op. cit., p. 462. This decision of Churchill's was partially supported by Roosevelt and Stalin at Teheran and became the first part of that conference's military conclusions, ibid., p. 404.

most effective government in power and to withdraw support from the other.

Mr. Churchill's chief aim, then, had to be to reconcile the two governments--one within and one without the country--and their respective policies. His decision was to withdraw official support from Mihailović and recall the British missions operating in Mihailović's territory.⁵ These actions were necessary in the face of the estimate provided the Prime Minister by the British Ambassador to the Royal Yugoslav Government, Sir Ralph Stevenson:

The partisans will be the rulers of Yugoslavia. They are of such value to us militarily that we must back them to the full, subordinating political considerations to military. It is extremely doubtful whether we can any longer regard the Monarchy as a unifying element in Yugoslavia.⁶

At the time, the strong British attitudes met with mixed reactions in Washington. Great Britain, by United States diplomatic consent, had been playing the major great-power role in the Balkans. The main reason for this was a verbal agreement between Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt, made at the Casablanca meeting in 1943, that the British would agree to the "unconditional surrender" announcement only if they in turn received complete charge of Allied military operations and corollary

⁵Ibid., p. 467.

⁶Ibid., p. 468.

diplomatic policy in the Middle East and the Balkans. Although this was acceptable to Roosevelt, he neglected to inform his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, of this matter. The Secretary found out quite some time later by accident.⁷

The Casablanca agreement did not coincide with most of the varied opinions within official Washington circles, perhaps because American political and military objectives were not as closely aligned at this time as were those of the British.

The consensus at the Department of State was for a more moderate stand, as can be seen in a memorandum sent to the British Embassy by Mr. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.:

This Government . . . has favored the extension of military aid to those resistance forces actively engaged against the Germans, without political distinction, and has avoided giving political support to either the nationalists or the Partisans.⁸

Another problem that faced the United States, according to Mr. H. F. Armstrong, a wartime special adviser to Secretary of State Hull, was that the complexities and obscurities of the Yugoslav situation for the United States were further confused by the ambiguity of the information

⁷The New York Times, December 17, 1944, p. 4.

⁸U. S. Department of State, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 257. Hereafter referred to as Yalta Conference.

and policy-making roles of the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) in relation to those of the Department of State:

It is easy to see that functions of information and policy-making which in a large measure had to be improvised in a great emergency, and which never were satisfactorily correlated, could become confused in dealing with the situation in Yugoslavia, where confusion was the keynote. Tito's reputation improved in the foreign as well as the domestic confusion, especially among those who, knowing or caring little about the past, fixed their eyes on current estimates of the military situation and felt that the political future must take care of itself.⁹

As far as the Pentagon was concerned, the military objectives, as seen by Generals Marshall and Eisenhower, were riveted in Western Europe, and did not allow for Churchill's plea for an attack on the "soft underbelly of Europe" in support of Tito. This objective was in direct contradiction to the Casablanca agreement, but Roosevelt obviously did nothing to counter his military advisers on the matter.

By June 1944, King Peter II had appointed Dr. Ivan Šubašić, the former Ban (governor) of Croatia, and at the time a resident of the United States, as Premier. It was the intention of the Royal Yugoslav Government, at the urging of the British, to reach an agreement with the Yugoslav Committee of National Liberation toward a united government. Winston Churchill wanted again to assure Tito that Mihailović was out of favor and a more flexible

⁹Armstrong, op. cit., p. 20.

political leadership was now available.¹⁰ Tito and Šubašić met that same month and began negotiations toward concluding an agreement. The final agreement was signed in late fall.

The British concurred in this agreement; the U. S. Department of State was less than enthusiastic:

The Tito-Subasic agreement, now awaiting the King's approval in London, would transfer the effective powers of government to the Tito organization, with just enough participation of the Government in exile to facilitate recognition by other governments.¹¹

In later years, the agreement was characterized by the U. S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary as "a complete surrender to Tito."¹²

The New York Times, in December, 1944, presented a very succinct estimate of the United States position vis-à-vis the Balkans, an accurate appraisal of the U. S. success in Yugoslavia up to that time:

The late American military and especially diplomatic policy in the Balkans, by adhering to the Casablanca agreement became to all intents and purposes a zero. Several important American diplomats and other officials tried to interest the White House in taking a more active role in the

¹⁰Churchill, op. cit., pp. 477-478.

¹¹Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 262.

¹²United States Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Yugoslav Communism: A Critical Study (ed. Charles Zalar; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 109. This report also carries the language of the agreement, pp. 108-9.

Balkans because of America's moral interests in her small Allies, Greece and Yugoslavia, as well as her eventual, although seemingly distant potential direct interests. These all failed.¹³

About this same time, increasing concern began sweeping through the Department of State over what was felt to be the British singlemindedness toward the military advantages accruing in Yugoslavia. The British, in their turn, discovered that the Americans were becoming more involved in the ultimate political solution of Yugoslavia, just as they gradually became so involved in all of Europe.

Knowing that President Roosevelt would soon be meeting with Churchill and Stalin in an historic conference, the Department of State felt it necessary to put in writing their views as to the overall U. S. attitudes toward the Balkans. In a briefing book paper, called "Reconstruction of Poland and the Balkans: American Interests and Soviet Attitudes," the following opinions were expressed:

It now seems clear that the Soviet Union will exert predominant political influence over the areas in question. While this Government would not want to oppose itself to such a political configuration, neither would it desire to see American influence in this part of the world completely nullified.

In the situation which is likely to prevail in Poland and the Balkan states after the war, the United States can hope to make its influence felt

¹³The New York Times, December 17, 1944, p. 4.

only if some degree of equal opportunity in trade, investment, and access to sources of information is preserved. American aid in the reconstruction of these areas would not only gain the good-will of the populations involved, but would also help bring about conditions which would permit the adoption of relatively liberal policies of this nature.¹⁴

These words are once practical and naive. Their practicality comes in the realization that American influence, never very significant in the Balkans, would not be aided and abetted through the approaching Soviet hegemony. The naivety appears in this obvious understatement and misunderstanding of the growing Soviet strength. Yugoslavia was apparently considered to be too Western oriented to be swept completely into the Soviet orbit. Churchill did not seem to fear such an event; on this point there were those in the Department of State who were not entirely in agreement with this position, who saw Tito as communizing all of Yugoslavia at war's end.¹⁵ One of these was the American Ambassador to Italy, Alexander C. Kirk. Kirk sent a telegram to Stettinius suggesting that "we might reexamine our position in respect to Yugoslavia" because "the present ruling group means to make use of every opportunity to enhance the prestige of the Soviet Union while seeking to

¹⁴Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 235.

¹⁵Armstrong, op. cit., p. 31.

discredit the western allies."¹⁶ Another supporter of this position was the U. S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., W. Averell Harriman, who warned of the ever greater spectre of Russian desires in Eastern Europe.¹⁷

The British were unable to influence King Peter that he should approve the Tito-Šubašić agreement primarily because of its treatment of the monarch, and the affair was gradually being bypassed by the war--much to Tito's advantage. Both the British and the Soviets were by now very piqued at King Peter's constant objections to certain points of the proposed agreement; and both countries requested that the United States send instructions to Richard C. Patterson, Jr., the U. S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, that would influence the Yugoslav King to give way in his objections and approve the agreement. The State Department once more refused, saying that both the King and Šubašić were fully aware of the American position.¹⁸

In January, 1945, as the Department of State prepared for the departure of President Roosevelt for the Malta meeting with Churchill and then on to Yalta to meet Marshal Stalin, the official American policy in the Balkans

¹⁶Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 434.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 64-66.

¹⁸Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 261.

remained one of non-intervention with great hopes for popular national solutions under the Atlantic Charter's concepts. Because Yugoslavia was unique in its most effective resistance to the German occupation forces and its two-government strife, a special briefing paper was prepared and submitted to the President on January 18th, along with the other position papers covering those areas of the world of primary interest to the great leaders.¹⁹ How well the President was able to brief himself during his trip, and how much he left to his "native" ability and intuition is a matter of continuing conjecture. Both Stettinius and the President's close adviser, Harry Hopkins, traveled by separate means and were, therefore, unavailable for intensive briefings; and the President is known to have used the voyage for a thorough rest.²⁰ In the case of Yugoslavia, the situation in London was so fluid that even day-to-day briefings could not have been of any significant help at Yalta.

At the same time that Roosevelt was receiving the briefing book, King Peter's advisers, who had previously convinced him that he should not concur with the Tito-

¹⁹ Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁰ Charles F. Delzell, Russian Power in Central-Eastern Europe (in The Meaning of Yalta, ed. John L. Snell. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 99.

Šubašić agreement, now informed him that Yalta would decide Yugoslavia's political future without regard to the agreement. The Acting Secretary of State, Mr. Joseph C. Grew, informed the traveling Secretary, Edward Stettinius that Tito believed that King Peter was stalling for time on the presumption that he would receive American support.²¹

Sidney Gruson, reporting from London, further explained the King's position:

And it is equally clear that they [the King's advisers] feel President Roosevelt will be the chief protagonist for their stand that the Yugoslavs have not fought to have a Communist government imposed on them without a chance to record their will in a secret ballot.²²

King Peter compounded things by an all but official dismissal of Premier Šubašić that found Šubašić threatening to take the cabinet to Belgrade and join with Tito--thus effectively ignoring the King. In Washington, Mr. Grew was interviewed about this and a Churchill intimation that the United States now approved of the British position on the agreement. His answers were very general, inferring continued non-participation by the United States.²³

²¹Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 961.

²²The New York Times, January 18, 1945, p. 6.

²³Ibid., January 24, 1945, p. 4.

By the first of February, this vague statement was proven to be a smoke-screen for an unprecedented United States action. It was understood, according to a New York Times report, that the United States had made it clear to Šubašić and the King that Washington wished the controversy settled. Mr. Grew instructed Ambassador Patterson to advise both of the principals that the United States believed it to be in the general interest that the Yugoslav Government be established in Belgrade as soon as possible, and that the American mission go there accredited to a Yugoslav government as unified and representative as possible. The King was left to deduce that unless he settled, the United States might be obliged to accredit its Ambassador to a Belgrade regime that he did not recognize.²⁴

The American pressure on the Yugoslavs gave new meaning to President Roosevelt's hint at a change of policy from non-intervention to "cannot and will not shrink from the political responsibilities which follow in the wake of the Battle." The New York Times concluded:

That the President and the State Department are moving into these controversial questions with extreme caution is apparent from the way in which this incident was handled. Some observers here believe, nevertheless, that this incident marks the beginning of a more active American policy in European political affairs.²⁵

²⁴The New York Times, February 1, 1945, p. 5.

²⁵Ibid.

The young King was helpless and finally agreed to Šubašić's trip to Belgrade and to the forming of a new government--without him. On the fifth of March, Marshal Tito was entrusted with the mandate to form a united Yugoslavian government.²⁶ Although the King's Regents were included in Tito's cabinet, the National Liberation Committee continued to hold the "reigns of power."

Dr. Charles Zalar, a former Yugoslav career diplomat and later a member of the Library of Congress research staff, in preparing the Senate study on Yugoslav Communism, accuses the British of being guilty of selling out the Yugoslav King:

The exasperation of the British government with the Yugoslav politicians is completely understandable. What is not understandable is that they should have tried to solve the problem by turning the Yugoslav peoples over to communism. This, in effect, is what they did. When they turned away from the Yugoslav government in London, they turned immediately toward Tito.²⁷

Dr. Zalar does not mention the position or the participation of the United States in this episode. Of course, his view is hindsight, but Zalar was very critical of Churchill's intelligence sources. Dr. Zalar and many others refer to the reports of Partisan military achievement as "exaggerated

²⁶ Ibid., March 6, 1945, p. 6.

²⁷ Senate Committee on the Judiciary, op. cit., p. 79.

and falsified," and accuse fellow-travelers and Communists in key positions as the perpetrators.²⁸ One result of this false intelligence can be seen in this newspaper report:

American aircraft have several times attacked targets described in briefings as "enemy strongholds" on information provided by Brigadier MacLean's [Fitzroy Hew MacLean, Churchill's choice to command the British Military Mission to the Yugoslav Partisans] mission and they have turned out to be General Mihailovic's centers.²⁹

Regardless of the suspicions, the confusion, and the lack of trustworthy intelligence, the political decision was to go with the man who already had the greatest military and administrative control within Yugoslavia. By pressing to get Dr. Šubašić to Belgrade perhaps something could be salvaged in the way of representative government. Perhaps the great decisions of Yalta could help.

²⁸Ibid., p. 87.

²⁹The New York Times, December 17, 1944, p. 4. For an analysis of the intelligence information the Allies were receiving, see David Martin, Ally Betrayed (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), pp. 84-102.

CHAPTER II

THE UNITED STATES, YALTA, AND YUGOSLAVIA

Within forty-eight hours of returning from his Crimean rendezvous with Prime Minister Churchill and Marshal Stalin, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the first of March, 1945, appeared before a joint session of Congress. In this, his first and last "personal report," the President exulted that the agreements at Yalta and the coming victory of the Allies would produce

the end of the system of unilateral action and exclusive alliances and spheres of influence and balances of power and all the other expedencies which have been tried for centuries and failed.¹

For the United States, the Yalta declaration was the climax of American hopes that, after victory, collaboration with the Soviet Union would be possible. Whether fortunately or unfortunately, Roosevelt did not live long enough to see his cherished aspirations for peaceful harmony wither away from the intense cold of the political climate following the war.

One great worry of the United States, as the Yalta Conference approached, seems to have been the perpetuation

¹The text of President Roosevelt's Yalta report to Congress may be found in The New York Times, March 2, 1945, p. 12.

of the concept of "spheres of influence." Cordell Hull, who was forced to retire as Secretary of State in the fall of 1944 because of poor health, had been constantly railing against any agreements creating spheres of influence. He was "flatly opposed to any division of Europe or sections of Europe into spheres of influence."² As Hull came to concentrate more and more on the postwar international peace organization--later to become the United Nations--the idea of such spheres became anathema to his dream for a truly international peace. Hull's dread can be seen in these words from the Department of State:

While we acknowledge the usefulness of arrangements for the conduct of the war, we cannot give our approval to such plans as would extend beyond the military field and retard the processes of broader international cooperation.³

Into the midst of the United States fear of re-established spheres stepped Winston Churchill and his infamous percentage agreement with Marshal Stalin. During the October 1944 Foreign Minister's conference in Moscow, Mr. Churchill admitted to having slipped a piece of paper to Marshal Stalin on which he divided up the Balkan states

²Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Vol. II (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), pp. 1451 and 1648.

³Yalta Conference (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 104.

into percentages of influence: Rumania and Bulgaria 90 per cent-10 per cent in the favor of the Russians; Greece 90 per cent-10 per cent in the favor of Great Britain; and Yugoslavia 50 per cent-50 per cent. Stalin nodded his head in agreement and checked off the paper with his blue pencil.⁴

This agreement, according to one of President Roosevelt's closest advisers, James F. Byrnes, extended only through the period of military occupation. Any military action the British felt necessary in order to quell internal disorders in Greece would have no interference from the Soviets. The British would not interfere in Rumania and Bulgaria.⁵

Perhaps to understand better Churchill's position in being willing to dispose casually of so questionable an issue, we should realize to what extent Great Britain was watching her former world prestige being eased into the hands of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Such an attempt at an agreement, then, can be seen as seeking a guarantee for at least some degree of British influence in Eastern Europe. Churchill's recounting of his proposal to

⁴Winston S. Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 227.

⁵James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 53.

Stalin indicates that the division of influence was a simple matter quickly done. That he did not mention the matter to President Roosevelt in his frequent messages during his conference with Stalin receives no explanation in his memoirs.

What Stalin thought of Churchill's motives is not available; but it has been surmised that the very fact that Churchill took the initiative must have indicated to Stalin that the British position was now uncertain, and under pressure Great Britain would retreat in future exchanges. Because Churchill had been willing to divide the Balkans into spheres, any reference to a moral stand at future conferences would be weakened materially.⁶ The fact that Stalin never once questioned the British Government's motives in her determined intervention in Greece, while the British Labor Party and many Americans spoke very critically of the affair, has been cited as convincing proof that Stalin was true to his bargain, at least up to the time of the Yalta conference.⁷

⁶Forrest C. Pogue, The Struggle for a New Order (in The Meaning of Yalta: Big Three Diplomacy and the New Balance of Power, ed. John L. Snell. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 26.

⁷Charles F. Delzell, Russian Power in Central-Eastern Europe (in Snell, op. cit.)

The American diplomats in Moscow that October got wind of the percentage agreement and informed Secretary Hull. However, they were only able to guess at the percentages other than the 50-50 agreement on Yugoslavia.

Hull recorded:

Later the Russians took it for granted that . . . Britain and the United States had assigned them a certain portion of the Balkans including Rumania and Bulgaria, as a sphere of influence. This assumption had its untoward effect at the Yalta Conference.⁸

The Yugoslavs were also very unhappy when they found out that Stalin was willing to casually "divide our skin."⁹ This can be considered one of the more significant seeds of discord that eventually led to the 1948 Yugoslav-Russian break.

The Department of State showed its concern over this possible division agreement between the British and the Russians by making sure that the subject received expanded

⁸Hull, op. cit., p. 1458. This was actually the second time the division of spheres had arisen between Churchill and Stalin. The first was in the spring of 1944 when Churchill, after broaching the subject to Stalin, managed to convince Roosevelt that such a purely military decision was worth a trial. Roosevelt agreed to a three-month trial against the advice of his Department of State. It is obvious though that the long-range political implications were far more meaningful to the Prime Minister.

⁹Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Tito and Goliath (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 35.

attention in the President's Yalta briefing book. Among those points made were:

We have also placed on record our uncertainty as to what extent the proposed agreement, in the formulation of which both Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin seem to have had a part, may be related to the arrangement between the British and Soviet Governments defining their respective interests in Southeastern Europe.

If an effort is made to associate this Government with this Yugoslav arrangement, it is recommended: (1) that we should emphasize our complete independence of action in dealing with the Yugoslav situation, despite any commitments which may be or may have been made by the British and Soviet Governments; and (2) that we should make any endorsement of a new administration in Yugoslavia contingent on freedom of movement and access to public opinion in Yugoslavia for our observers to survey the situation.¹⁰

Robert Wolff, a wartime member of the O.S.S., and an acknowledged expert in both Balkan history and Balkan languages, looks upon this viewpoint of the Department of State as an "abstract, not to say immature, view of international affairs." He accuses the Department of State of standing on pious moral ground, with little to offer as a substitute.¹¹

¹⁰Yalta Conference, op. cit., pp. 262-263. A full treatment of the American policy toward spheres of influence and the problems besetting the British at this time can be found on pp. 103-8.

¹¹Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 257. Wolff's view is somewhat harsh in the light of the

In reviewing the minutes and related documents of the Yalta Conference, it is immediately evident that only a minimum time was spent on the subject of Yugoslavia. The majority of the talk centered around Poland over which there were extensive conflicting opinions and views. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was a subject on which prior agreement was reached, at least between Prime Minister Churchill and Marshal Stalin.¹² All that was left, therefore, was to convince President Roosevelt that a simple declaration to this effect was sufficient. During the Yugoslav discussions neither the President nor his staff raised any pressing questions, leaving the subject primarily to the British and Soviet delegates.¹³ The President's mind seems to have been mostly occupied with Poland (perhaps the extensive Polish vote in the United States) and the creation of the United Nations.

Stalin questioned the British on at least two occasions, asking what was delaying the creation of the unified Tito-Šubašić government. Churchill's reply indicated his

moral responsibility the Department of State obviously felt in this matter. American officials wanted to avoid any accusation of selling out Yugoslavia to the Russians.

¹²Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 843.

¹³Ibid., p. 811.

disgust with King Peter's obstinacy over the formation of a regency.¹⁴ All parties to the conference seemed to concur with Marshal Stalin's request for an immediate declaration on the Tito-Šubašić agreement, but it was not until February 10, 1945, that they agreed on the wording of a telegram to both Marshal Tito and Dr. Šubašić asking for action.¹⁵ As it turned out, the urgency of the telegram was wasted because Dr. Šubašić was finding it very difficult to reach Belgrade to join Tito. As Mr. Grew informed Secretary Stettinius:

The departure of the Subasic Government has been postponed for several days. King Peter has been informed by Subasic that Simovich and Sotej are unacceptable to Tito as regents and must be replaced. The King will insist on having Sutej and will not permit his government to leave until the regents are appointed and approved.¹⁶

Grew later amended this message by saying that it was Šubašić rather than Tito who objected to Simović, and that the British believed Šubašić would go to Belgrade even without King Peter's approval.¹⁷

When the final drafts of the conference were concluded, the section on Yugoslavia took the form of a recommendation to Marshal Tito and Dr. Šubašić not significantly

¹⁴Ibid., p. 781.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 908.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 957.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 961.

different than the telegram that the three leaders sent on February tenth:

We have agreed to recommend to Marshal Tito and Dr. Subasic that the Agreement between them should be put into effect immediately, and that a new Government should be formed on the basis of that Agreement.

We also recommend that as soon as the new Government has been formed, it should declare that:

(i) The Anti-fascist Assembly of National Liberation (Avnoj) should be extended to include members of the last Yugoslav Parliament (Skupschina) who have not compromised themselves by collaboration with the enemy, thus forming a body to be known as a temporary Parliament; and

(ii) legislative acts passed by the Anti-fascist Assembly of National Liberation (AVNOJ) will be subject to subsequent ratification by a Constituent Assembly.¹⁸

The American delegation could find little hint of spheres of influence in this declaration and raised no objections to its inclusion in the Yalta agreements.

Yugoslavia could also be regarded as an interested party to the "Declaration on Liberated Europe" issued by the Big Three at Yalta; that declaration that opted for solving political and economic difficulties by democratic means, forming representative and democratic governments, and carrying out free elections. And yet, Yugoslavia was only on the fringe of the Yalta Conference; and no one,

¹⁸Ibid., p. 974.

not even Stalin, knew how Marshal Tito would react to the conference's recommendations.¹⁹

President Roosevelt's attitude toward Tito and the Yugoslav government enigma can perhaps be detected in these words from his personal report to Congress:

Agreement was reached on Yugoslavia . . . and we hope that it is in the process of fulfillment. But it is not only that, but in some other places we have to remember there are a great number of prima donnas in the world, all who wish to be heard.²⁰

Whatever else the Yalta declaration on Yugoslavia was intended to do, the one thing that it did accomplish immediately was to obtain for the future regime in Yugoslavia its international recognition.

On March 2, 1945, the Yugoslav regents were finally appointed and took their oath. All three (a Serb, a Croat, and a Slovene) were Tito's candidates although not members of the Communist Party. On March 5, Dr. Šubašić's Royal Yugoslav Government resigned to the Regency Council. The same day, the National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia handed its resignation to the Presidium of the AVNOJ. On March 7, the Regency Council appointed a new government,

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 781-782.

²⁰ In quoting the speech, The New York Times of March 2, 1945 (p. 12), reported that this allusion to prima donnas was ad-libbed by the President.

headed by Marshal Tito, as proposed by the Presidium of the AVNOJ. This was the first and the last act of the Regency Council.

Tito's Partisans made up the great majority of the ministers. Tito's first pronouncement in his new status was made for the benefit of the outside world on March 11. Tito pledged to his countrymen to cooperate with the post-war international organizations including friendly relations with the Allies. He also pledged free elections as soon as possible, a regulation of the economy, and civil liberties. "The Government will take part in the international organizations and activities aimed at securing peace."²¹ The hopes of Yalta echoed throughout his speech.

By the middle of the summer of 1945, Japan followed Germany in succumbing to the Allied strength. Now the eyes of the world were ready to focus on the workings of peace and freedom. In Yugoslavia, there seemed to be differences of opinion on how best to interpret such phrases as "civil liberties," "democratic processes," and "unified leadership." As Stalin had opined, Tito was a proud man who, as the popular head of a regime, might resent advice.²²

²¹The New York Times, March 11, 1945, p. 28.

²²Yalta Conference, op. cit., p. 781.

Mr. R. H. Markham, a leading American educator and journalist, voiced the views of many of Yugoslavia's exiles and others who followed Tito's actions closely when he spoke of Yalta's results in Yugoslavia six months after the conference:

None of the specific provisions was carried out by the new Government. Far from being "broadly representative of all democratic elements," this new Government is completely dominated by one party--the Communist--which is authorized to speak for only a small fraction of the nation

Political freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, as well as a guarantee of personal freedom which the new Provisional Government of Yugoslavia was bound to guarantee, are nonexistent.²³

As far as the official United States Policy was concerned, the Yugoslav situation was not turning out well at all. The complaints from Yugoslav emigrants and Mihailović boosters were backed by two congressional inquiries even before the Yalta meeting. It became obvious that even the few Yugoslav ministers who were not former members of the Partisans had no authority and no voice in the actual administration of Yugoslavia. The general elections were set for November. Neither British nor American diplomats expected anything but an overwhelming victory for Tito.

²³The New York Times (letter to the editors), August 19, 1945, p. 18.

The territorial claims in Europe also bothered the American diplomats. Both the British and the Americans hoped for a just and equitable solution in each instance. Mr. Joseph Grew expressed the U. S. attitude:

It is a firm policy of the United States, as its allies have been officially informed, that territorial change should be made only after thorough study and after full consultation and deliberation between the various governments concerned.²⁴

Yugoslavia was especially adamant about adjustments in the Yugoslav-Austrian frontier and the Venezia Giulia area (including Trieste). Washington saw the problem "as far more than a mere frontier controversy between two claimants. It raises the issue of the settlement of international disputes by orderly process rather than unilateral actions."²⁵ One of the problem areas, the Yugoslav-Austrian border, was raised at Yalta; but the conferees agreed that its solution would have to come later. Now Yugoslavia was claiming the Venezia Giulia by right of conquest, and only some rapid diplomatic maneuvering kept the situation from erupting into conflict. Tito's claim to the occupation of Trieste was, according to the Allies, contrary to an agreement of the previous February providing for occupation of

²⁴U. S. Department of State, Bulletin, Vol. XII (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 902. Hereafter referred to as Bulletin.

²⁵Ibid., p. 902.

all Italy by the Western Powers. The matter was finally resolved by a joint agreement between the United States, Great Britain, and Yugoslavia.²⁶ But the issue of Trieste would plague the United States-Yugoslav relations until the disposition in 1954.

Although the issue of the return of King Peter to Yugoslavia was supposed to be settled by the election in November, 1945, Tito had already taken it upon himself to change the name of the state to Democratic Federative Yugoslavia, its flag, and its coat-of-arms, all of which were supposedly to be changed only by a constituent assembly. Even the new postage stamps issued after the war bore the likeness of the Partisan leader.²⁷

The pressure upon the non-Partisan ministers, and their very frustration, finally culminated in August in the resignation of Mr. Milan Grol, the Vice-Premier of the new government. When the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Dr. Šubašić, also submitted his resignation two months later, the coalition government proposed by the United States, Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. at Yalta collapsed. In announcing his resignation, Dr. Šubašić charged that the

²⁶Ibid., p. 1050.

²⁷Constantin Fotitch, The War We Lost (New York: Viking Press, 1948), p. 309.

Tito regime had employed in Yugoslavia certain totalitarian tactics, including the maintenance of a secret underground police organization, that free elections had thus been rendered impossible, and that other conditions required by recognition of the coalition regime had not been met.²⁸

Šubašić had been unable to go to London, where the first conference of the foreign ministers of the four Great Powers was in session, as provided in the Yalta agreement. Konstantin Fotić accuses the Yugoslav government of preventing Šubašić's attendance by manufacturing the excuse that, due to a sudden sickness, such a trip would imperil Šubašić's life.²⁹ He resigned shortly thereafter, prompting Tito to observe to the Czech Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Josef Korbel, "Šubašić resigned on the instruction which he received from abroad."³⁰

These actions could not go unnoticed in London and Washington, but no official could deduce a peaceable method of coercing the new Yugoslav government into abiding by their former agreement. Now in both foreign offices, the game turned to one of awaiting the November elections. On

²⁸The New York Times, October 16, 1945, p. 8.

²⁹Fotitch, op. cit., p. 310.

³⁰Josef Korbel, Tito's Communism (Denver, Colorado: University of Denver Press, 1951), p. 29.

the eve of the elections, C. L. Sulzberger saw the British attitude as right in line with that of Washington:

It is believed that Britain is not eager to be tough in eastern European areas where there are differences with the Soviet Union [referred to as the uselessness of backing lost causes]

It is by no means likely that Britain will cancel her recognition of the Yugoslav Government despite the probability the elections, run under a law much disliked here, will unquestionably result in a landslide for Marshal Tito.

British and United States statesmen have been discussing quietly what is termed a reassessment of their Yugoslav policy. There is no indication that they will put enormous pressure on Belgrade aside from certain economic factors that have been stressed. They will probably continue to talk, politely suggesting that Marshal Tito rearrange his regime along lines satisfactory to the West.³¹

Exiled Yugoslav politicians sent frantic messages to both the United States and British Governments claiming that the elections would not be free. They criticized the two allied governments for not forcing the Tito regime to abide by (their interpretation of) the Tito-Šubašić agreement and the Yalta decision.³² However, as Mr. Armstrong pointed out:

The British and the Americans found themselves in the humiliating position of being unable to do anything to obtain compliance with either the

³¹The New York Times, November 10, 1945, p. 3.

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³¹The New York Times, November 10, 1945, p. 3.

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Declaration on Liberated Europe or the Tito-Shubashich Agreement.³³

The election itself, on November 11, 1945, was not nearly as complicated as the exiles had tried to claim. Since there was little strength in any political party other than Tito's National Front, there was little opposition at the voting polls. The confusion of adjusting once more to peacetime perhaps prevented the democratic parties from joining together in an effort to compete against the Partisans and their National Front. The issue presented to the people was the "hero" Tito against the King who had run to England during the war. Even more simply stated in their propaganda it was a monarchy against a republic. Without the strength to counter this image, the democratic parties went down to a resounding defeat. Voting injustices and irregularities were charged and there is little doubt that all this and more happened; but the results would have been almost the same without the irregularities. Regardless of the political pressure that might have been brought to bear, the people--the voters--were mentally and even physically tired. It was a most confusing time.

Both the government and the people expected some attempt at election interference from the West. Josef

³³Armstrong, op. cit., p. 45.

Korbel says that the Yugoslav people listened avidly to the Voice of America and the BBC, reading into every bit of news that Washington and London were following the situation very closely and that they were resolved to invoke the articles of the Yalta declaration.³⁴ Tito told Ambassador Korbel that he did not expect any direct diplomatic intervention. What he did worry about was the international recognition his government needed, and he was rather surprised that there was no official intervention on the part of the Allied powers.³⁵

The Constituent Assembly met on November 29, 1945, the second anniversary of the session of the AVNOJ at Jajce. Once the election results were verified (96 per cent in favor of the People's Front) and the deputies confirmed, the Assembly declared Yugoslavia a republic--the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. And then, by unanimous vote, the monarchy was abolished and King Peter, accused of having supported collaborationists, and his heirs were divested of all rights.³⁶ The King appealed to his onetime staunch supporter, Great Britain, but the postwar British

³⁴Korbel, op. cit., p. 31.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 29-30.

³⁶The New York Times, November 30, 1945, p. 1.

weakness and the traditional lack of support for monarchies in the United States served to dim the King's hopes.

The United States waited four weeks before declaring its intentions towards Yugoslavia. On December 22, instructions were sent to Ambassador Patterson to inform Marshal Tito that notwithstanding its [Yugoslavia's] failure to hold free and untrammelled elections" the United States would now recognize the Tito Government "on the assumption that the Belgrade regime would give the customary assurances that international obligations and existing treaties with us would be respected."³⁷ Dean Acheson added to this that recognition did not imply approval of the policies of the regime, and expressed the hope that, in the evolution of events, Yugoslavia would develop conditions of which the United States would finally and wholeheartedly approve.³⁸

The British made a simultaneous announcement of recognition and thereby discredited the monarchy. Peter was now permanently cut off except for the formal amenities Great Britain traditionally accorded Europe's ousted royalty.³⁹

³⁷Bulletin, Vol. XIII (1945), p. 1021.

³⁸The New York Times, December 23, 1945, p. 8.

³⁹Ibid.

For some as yet unexplained reason, Tito did not answer Washington with the necessary pledges of being prepared to observe the existing treaties and agreements. When quizzed in late February, 1946, Secretary of State Byrnes admitted that the recognition of Yugoslavia had not been completed, and the full accreditation of Mr. Patterson would have to await the proper action by Yugoslavia.⁴⁰ Finally, on April 2, 1946, the Yugoslav Government sent the formal assurances that she accepted the existing treaties and agreements. On April 18, the United States accorded Yugoslavia full diplomatic recognition.

The opinions have varied as to why the West, and especially the United States, should so readily accord recognition to an obviously communist government. The critics point to the Yalta agreements, especially the section on liberated Europe, and declare that the Allies did not live up to their promises. In retrospect, it is difficult to support this accusation against the United States. Certainly the Americans, by this time unquestionably deeply involved in European affairs, did not lack political acuity. The moral obligations involved: the reports of terrorist activity, restriction of civil liberties, persecutions, although probably valid, could not outweigh the political

⁴⁰Ibid., February 27, 1946, p. 14.

decision for recognition. In the strict terms of Yalta, the elections had been held and the people were afforded the opportunity to vote for or against the National Front. Also, in August, 1945, some of the prewar members of the Yugoslav Parliament were added to the AVNOJ, thus carrying out both the Tito-Šubašić agreement and the Yalta declaration.

It was undoubtedly politically expedient to use the recognition of Yugoslavia, as well as those of Bulgaria and Rumania, as a sign of good faith toward the Russians. Although Fotić calls this "pursuit of the mirage of collaboration,"⁴¹ the Western nations hoped to ease the growing Soviet pressures, and at the smallest price. The one remaining consideration for the American Government was the aversion to conflict that was now prevalent in the United States. Overt action of interference by the United States in Yugoslavia would have received the support of only those few emigrants who really cared.

President Truman had made one last effort toward a high-sounding moral stand when, in January, 1946, he said that the country reserved the right to withdraw even conditional recognition of the Yugoslav Government if it fell

⁴¹Fotitch, op. cit., p. 322.

short of the democratic processes agreed to at Yalta.⁴²

The political fact was, however, that the United States had agreed at Yalta to recognize the Tito regime, subject to conditions. Now the United States had to go through with that recognition.

Once recognition was accorded, the United States wanted to shift most of its dealing with Yugoslavia to the forum of the United Nations, hoping that the moral pressure of that august international organization, of which Yugoslavia was a charter member, would force a modification of the terror, purges, and trials reportedly sweeping Yugoslavia.

⁴²The New York Times, January 9, 1946, p. 1.

CHAPTER III

THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION AND YUGOSLAVIA

The ravages of the war were so impressively shocking that a proposal was made by various allied governments to create an international agency whose sole purpose would be to attempt to relieve the suffering and misery in those countries being freed from the Axis occupation. By agreement among the allied nations in September, 1943, this agency was named the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The term "United Nations" was a favorite of President Roosevelt's since the days of the Atlantic Charter; and since the United States was, of necessity, the leading nation in the new organization, the name was quickly agreed upon. UNRRA eventually included some forty-eight nations, all pledged to aid the war-stricken areas of Europe and the East by allotting 1 per cent of their national income of 1943. As the President explained the situation to Congress in his budget message for the fiscal year 1945:

As we close in on the enemy we are confronted with the necessity of initiating the restoration of civilian life and productivity in the liberated areas. Both relief and the commencement of the process of rehabilitation will be necessary requirements of military occupation.

In the liberated areas, relief must of necessity, be a military problem at the outset. This job will be turned over to civilian administration as soon as feasible. For this reason the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration has been created.¹

In the eyes of the United States, UNRRA offered a means toward postwar stability. However, as on many other issues, both the President and the Department of State found out early that Congress wanted to share the responsibility of providing for this new agency.

The first committee meetings took place in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in November of 1943. The internationally famous names present lent prestige to the inauguration of the agency: Jean Monnet of France, Lester Pearson of Canada, Paul-Henri Spaak of Belgium, and Dean Acheson of the United States. The first Director General was the former Governor of New York, Herbert H. Lehman. Yugoslavia was represented by the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States, Konstantin Fotić, a member of the Royal Yugoslav Government in exile. Mr. Fotić said that even his country, where destruction of population and resources had been extreme because of the guerrilla warfare, would be able to make contributions to the relief pool.² Despite such magnanimous

¹As quoted in The New York Times, January 14, 1944, p. 10.

²The New York Times, November 14, 1943, p. 43.

gestures, it was obvious that the United States would have to bear the major burden of support.

In a somewhat idealistic tone, the committee announced that those governments receiving food and other relief from UNRRA would be required to refrain from using them as a political weapon to maintain themselves in power. Although those governments who were able should have charge of distribution in their own countries so that national sovereignty might be preserved, the agency would run periodic checks, in order to attempt to assure proper distribution and avoid inequities and other violations.³ The checks turned out to be one of UNRRA's greatest burdens.

After procurement of funds, for which the United States was initially responsible,⁴ the main obstacle to smooth operations as UNRRA attempted to launch its program was the non-availability of transportation to deliver the relief supplies. The first goal was to provide aid in regard to health, welfare, and repatriation of displaced persons to Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The idea was that, as the military moved on, UNRRA would take over the

³The New York Times, November 25, 1943, p. 31.

⁴Bulletin, Vol. X (1944), p. 535. Congress maintained a running battle with the President and the Department of State over the appropriation and control of funds for UNRRA.

main burden of that type of assistance. Until peace was declared, at least in Europe, the distribution of relief funds could not compete with the prosecution of the war. Supplies for the military always received the priority.

Relief for Yugoslavia was ready to begin by the fall of 1944, but was held up by a dispute over distribution control. Tito's Committee of National Liberation refused to accept the UNRRA aid because it was proposed that UNRRA set up its own machinery for distribution instead of using what the Committee referred to as "the already established organ of the people's authority."⁵ The bickering also included the number of observers to be allowed in Yugoslavia. Finally, on January 21, 1945, it was announced that both Tito and the Royal Yugoslav Government had concurred with the proposal for the United States and Great Britain, through UNRRA, to initiate supplies and services to Yugoslavia, while Yugoslav authorities would administer them.⁶ The stalemate of many weeks was ended because UNRRA officials agreed to the appointment of a Russian, Colonel Mikail Sergeichik, as the Director General of the UNRRA mission in Yugoslavia rather than an American or a Britisher

⁵The New York Times, October 3, 1944, p. 1.

⁶Ibid., January 22, 1945, p. 5.

as was first proposed.⁷ As C. L. Sulzberger explained it:

The Allies' representatives will supervise the admission of relief supplies and their distribution to actual Yugoslav organization, but the field distribution will be controlled personally and directly by Yugoslavs appointed by the Committee of National Liberation.⁸

A total of one hundred observers was agreed upon, and to meet immediate needs, rolling stock (locomotives, trucks), and clothes for the rest of the winter were hurried to the Adriatic ports by then under the control of the Partisans.

Marshal Tito was quick to express his appreciation for the aid. In a message he forwarded to a dinner gathering in New York City in February, 1945, he thanked America for all the financial contributions made during the war; and he renewed his plea for increased relief. Senator James E. Murray of Montana, one of the guest speakers at the dinner in honor of Tito's gallant stand against Germany, told the guests that Tito was a great leader who must be assisted in re-establishing the economy of Yugoslavia.⁹

When the war ended in Europe, transportation difficulties eased and the flow of UNRRA goods greatly increased.

⁷Eric L. Pridonoff, Tito's Yugoslavia (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955), p. 215.

⁸The New York Times, January 23, 1945, p. 4.

⁹Ibid., February 8, 1945, p. 6.

Although the problem of authority between the military occupation and the UNRRA missions remained, the military could now turn its attention to promoting the objectives of UNRRA without as much distraction.

Groups outside of UNRRA began criticizing Yugoslavia for only paying \$5,000 of its allotted share of \$70,000 to the UNRRA fund, while such nations as Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France had paid their share in full.¹⁰ Dr. Rudolf Bicanić, Yugoslavia's representative to UNRRA, asked for greater choice for Yugoslavia in the final disposition of supplies because:

Some nations have paid in the blood of their peoples and others have paid in goods for the victory of the United Nations Of a total of 5,500,000 people in Yugoslavia directly affected by the war, every third person is a victim of war; in every family two members at least are affected by war.¹¹

Perhaps this also explains Yugoslavia's tardiness in paying off the UNRRA allotment.

In September, 1945, President Truman sent a message to Congress asking for an increase of the initial limitation of \$1,350,000,000 to complete the work of UNRRA.

¹⁰The New York Times, April 12, 1945, p. 12. It should be noted that at this time Australia had paid none of its allotted share of the UNRRA fund.

¹¹As quoted in The New York Times, August 15, 1945, p. 3.

Truman said that with the end of the war there was a lot be be done, and predicted that UNRRA's work would be absorbed by the United Nations organization at the end of 1946.¹² The request for funds prompted The New York Times to tally the UNRRA assistance to Yugoslavia up to that time:

In Yugoslavia, UNRRA is credited with contributing to the principal part of the diet for at least 3,000,000 persons and to have supplemented the food of 4,000,000 more. The agency flew in spare parts for Yugoslav harvest machines; closed up great transportation gaps with tractors and trucks and rails and rolling stock; sent raw cotton and wool into the mills, and furnished medical supplies to thousands.

Yugoslavia had such a serious crop failure this year that 50,000 tons of wheat a month are considered necessary to carry the people through the winter. Marshal Tito himself took a hand to step up by 50 percent the clearance of supplies out of the ports to the people.¹³

Ambassador Patterson contended that the aid supplied was not enough. The transition from war to peace was very difficult for Yugoslavia. Even though Yugoslavia's political difficulties would be settled in time, more help was needed. The Ambassador added:

They need all kinds of economic help. They need it badly. About 75 percent of the rolling stock, farm equipment and livestock was stolen by the

¹²Bulletin, Vol. XIII (1945), pp. 575-577.

¹³The New York Times, September 9, 1945, p. 17. See also Bulletin, Vol. XIII (1945), pp. 382-384.

Germans and the rehabilitation period is going to be terrific.¹⁴

The winter of 1945-1946 was a difficult one for UNRRA in Yugoslavia. The two initial problems, slowness of the supplies in being shipped and the adjustment of authority between the military and the UNRRA officials, continued to plague UNRRA efforts. The dilatory food shipments threatened the starvation of 3,000,000 Yugoslavs. Congress was asked to appropriate another \$1,350,000,000 as the United States continued to contribute over 70 per cent of the UNRRA funds.¹⁵ Despite UNRRA's generosity, thousands of Europeans and Asians died because of the transition time necessary between appropriation and delivery.¹⁶ Even once the supplies arrived, the bureaucratic problems within each country meant a further delay in delivery to the needy.

It was during this same winter that UNRRA was also faced with increasing criticism from both Europe and the United States. Tito's communist government was especially suspect. The charges in the case of Yugoslavia ranged from accusations that the people were not being told that the supplies were from UNRRA but rather from Tito and Stalin,

¹⁴The New York Times, September 9, 1945, p. 28.

¹⁵Bulletin, Vol. XIII (1945), p. 808.

¹⁶These deaths are cited more than once in both The New York Times and the Congressional Record.

to claims that Tito's 750,000 man army was entirely supplied by UNRRA. As UNRRA ran its course during 1946, those particular charges were never satisfactorily dispelled.¹⁷

In a very perceptive article, Albion Ross summed up the political implications of the supposedly apolitical UNRRA:

UNRRA has become of decisive importance in this part of the world [Europe] in determining whether the Communist dominated regimes or the Government that are not Communist shall have the immense advantage of being able to lead the way to reconstruction and to the return of a fair degree of prosperity. Any Government's success or failure here depends fundamentally at present upon the aid it receives from UNRRA and the nature of that aid.¹⁸

The former mayor of New York City and the then Director General of UNRRA, Fiorello H. La Guardia, became incensed over Ross' remarks and a series of articles he had written critical of UNRRA's status in Yugoslavia. But Ross' criticism was nothing compared to the torrent of abuse that fell on UNRRA later in the summer of 1946 when two unarmed American aircraft were downed in Yugoslavia, one with the loss of five American lives. The political crisis this incident created between the United States and

¹⁷For a blistering attack and many strong accusations against UNRRA and the people who worked for it, read Fridonoff, Tito's Yugoslavia, especially pp. 103-4, 1928-202, 214-224.

¹⁸The New York Times, May 12, 1946, p. 30.

Yugoslavia will be discussed later. The threat to continued American contributions to UNRRA was immediate and serious. American Legion chapters from all over the United States sent resolutions of protest to Congress and to the Department of State demanding cessation of UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia. The Longshoreman's Union refused to load the ships listed for Yugoslavia with UNRRA supplies. Even children's groups sent protests.

Mr. La Guardia was beset by problems: charges of UNRRA mismanagement in Yugoslavia, the unpopular sentiment Tito had caused through the just completed trial and execution of General Mihailović, and the protests in light of the loss of the two aircraft. He pleaded to the public to understand that the UNRRA funds were not American controlled, and therefore the United States had no authority to stop shipment, whatever the cause.¹⁹

La Guardia's plea did not decrease the pressure, however, and it was not until the Acting Secretary of State, William L. Clayton, came to the rescue that continued shipment of the UNRRA supplies was assured. On September 12, Mr. Clayton announced that the United States would not stop shipments of UNRRA supplies to Yugoslavia in retaliation for the shutdown. He made the announcement, he explained,

¹⁹Ibid., August 30, 1946, p. 3.

in recognition of widespread demands in the country that shipment be stopped immediately. Any retaliation on the part of the United States, even though the Yugoslav behavior was inexcusable, "would be a violation of the obligations we assumed when we agreed to participate in UNRRA. American demands in regard to the shooting down of our aviators have been largely met."²⁰ The abuse subsided, but the incident was not forgotten.

American interest in UNRRA had begun to flag. At the fifth council session of UNRRA, Mr. La Guardia's recommendation that European relief begin liquidation about October 1, 1946, brought cries of protest from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria, Yugoslavia, and others. They pleaded for continuation until the organization's responsibilities could be taken over by the United Nations and other bodies.²¹ In this same vein, the former head of UNRRA, Governor Lehman cautioned:

If UNRRA is discontinued before provision is made by the United Nations to carry on the work, chaotic conditions are bound to ensue which will wipe out much of the noteworthy gains made by UNRRA during its three years of operation.²²

The United States, for one, was very anxious to see the

²⁰Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 544.

²¹Ibid., p. 330.

²²The New York Times, August 4, 1946, p. 1.

complicated financial and political responsibilities of UNRRA taken over by the United Nations.

The United Nations, in its turn, designated a sub-commission for economic reconstruction of devastated areas to send field teams to investigate the various aspects of UNRRA. The field team that went to Yugoslavia reported that country as "well on the road to recovery." Their report continued: "UNRRA relief has been of vital importance, and wherever the sub-commission went they saw UNRRA locomotives, trucks, and farm equipment."²³ In October, the United Nations began its considerations on how best to absorb the UNRRA operations.

Mr. La Guardia had also sent an UNRRA team to Yugoslavia to investigate the many charges. Their report of no serious defects in the handling of relief was met by cries of "whitewash" from UNRRA critics.²⁴ La Guardia was tired of all the abuse and announced his pending resignation.

The funds appropriated for UNRRA kept supplies on their way to Yugoslavia until well into 1947. Marshal Tito properly expressed his gratitude for the aid,²⁵ and the

²³The New York Times, September 13, 1946, p. 16.

²⁴Ibid., October 16, 1946, p. 13.

²⁵Letter from Tito to La Guardia in connection with the third anniversary of UNRRA, The New York Times, November 11, 1946, p. 3.

United States made no attempt to interfere with delivery. Yet relations between the two countries became very strained during this period. C. L. Sulzberger, making a tour through Yugoslavia in October and November, 1946, reported that the people held UNRRA and the United States in highest esteem. On the other hand, the official Yugoslav attitude was one of increasing antagonism.²⁶

It has been said that the Department of State's postwar interest in Yugoslavia was due in considerable part to the American participation in UNRRA. This same statement may also be made in regard to the Congress of the United States. For it was because of congressional pressure that UNRRA came to an end. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes explained:

We did not try to extend the life of UNRRA because it was decided that, instead of other governments allocating funds appropriated by us for relief, the United States should make the allocation.²⁷

President Roosevelt and the Department of State were at odds with Congress from the very inception of the idea of UNRRA in 1942. Congressional leaders insisted that formation of such an agency must necessarily receive the

²⁶The New York Times, November 13, 1946, p. 13.

²⁷James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 307.

approval of Congress. After the President's 1944 message to Congress, Representative Paul W. Shafer of Michigan accused the Administration of:

. . . an attempt to push our Nation, under disguise, further into the field of international bribery. Under the guise of humanitarian impulses, this proposal [appropriation for \$1,350,000,000] will entangle us in the maze of petty political squabbles of every nation in the world If it is the will of Congress and of our people to spend money to help those left in distress in the wake of this horrible war, let us stand on our own two feet and do it ourselves.

Representative Shafer went on to predict that: "Within one year this world W.P.A. will be riddled with waste, inefficiency and scandal."²⁸

Despite some congressional opposition, once the agency was approved, Congress maintained a close surveillance over appropriations for UNRRA and distribution of UNRRA supplies. Following the end of the war, Congress tended more and more to specify what countries and areas should receive what percentages of the relief funds; and they even went so far as to place a time limit on American participation.²⁹ When Congress specified that American citizens should supervise and control the aid expenditures

²⁸Congressional Record, Vol. XC (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. A393.

²⁹For a compilation of congressional opinions about UNRRA, see Congressional Record, Vol. XCI, pp. 7745-7752.

in every country, the United States could no longer be a viable part of UNRRA. As Dean Acheson said:

The people of the United States and the Congress of the United States have made up their minds that the relief problems of the near future are not of a character which would warrant grants of enormous sums of money for the United States Treasury under conditions which would leave little or no effective control by the grantor of these funds.³⁰

Yugoslavia had received more than 14 per cent of UNRRA's entire budget, some \$435,000,000 worth of assistance. The United States had contributed 72 per cent of that budget.³¹ Millions of Yugoslav lives were saved by the relief provided by UNRRA. And yet, relations between the United States and Yugoslavia were at their lowest ebb in history. A special request for additional aid made directly to the United States by Yugoslavia in the spring of 1947 was flatly rejected.³² The United States no longer felt quite so generous toward Yugoslavia. Although the two countries were in constant communications, both were moving cautiously.

³⁰ Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 1108.

³¹ Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 323.

³² Bulletin, Vol. XVI (1947), pp. 585-586.

CHAPTER IV

WARTIME ADMIRATION TURNS TO PEACETIME ANTAGONISM

Of the many areas of official and unofficial contact between Yugoslavia and the United States during 1946, the three most explosive issues were the aforementioned arrest, trial, and execution of General Draža Mihailović; the loss of two unarmed American military aircraft to Yugoslav fighter planes; and the Yugoslav demands in the Trieste area. The Mihailović tragedy and the aircraft incident brought forth a torrent of public expressions of opinion by the American people, the vast majority of which were extensively anti-Yugoslavian. Administration officials within the United States were hard pressed to maintain a balanced and objective policy towards Yugoslavia under these trying circumstances both because of the public and congressional outcries and because of the growing antipathy of the Yugoslav Government towards the United States.

I. MIHAILOVIĆ

As far as most of the American public was concerned, General Draža Mihailović wore the mantle of a hero as early as 1942. His gallant Četnici had even received the glorified publicity of a Hollywood movie. It had been

Mihailović's role to take command of those Yugoslavs, military and civilian, who had taken to the hills and woods when Yugoslavia was occupied by the Axis. King Peter, in exile in London, in recognition of Mihailović's deeds, appointed him a General and the Minister of War for the Royal Yugoslav Government. Shortly after Hitler's forces attacked the Soviet Union, the Četnici were joined in their insurgency by the Partisans of Josip Broz-Tito. Unfortunately, due to political and ethnic factors the two Yugoslav forces could not continue combined operations; and for the remainder of the war they were constantly fighting each other.¹

Mihailović's image began to dim when the British Government decided to back Tito's Partisans. A constant barrage of pro-Tito propaganda followed that left both the British and American public confused. Robert Wolff says that Mihailović's glorification had been due mainly to the pro-Serb faction of the Yugoslavs in exile and did not represent the feelings of the majority of Yugoslavians.²

¹Tito sought an alliance with Mihailović which would have meant joint operations, a joint command, and even the creation of provisional authorities to consist of representatives of all political groups which were willing to fight the invaders. Presumably, because of his loathing for communism, Mihailović refused, Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 209.

²Ibid., p. 207.

Dr. Zalar did not take such a harsh viewpoint, but admitted to a naive Mihailović:

Mihailović was not a politician. He was a Serbian patriot, and, as an officer, devoted to the King. He depended on political advisers, all of whom, domestic and foreign, failed him terribly.³

Mihailović lost the support of the Allies at a time when that support meant an increasing amount of guns and ammunition supplied by Great Britain and the United States. Almost all of the arms went to the Partisans, thus increasing Tito's effectiveness against the Četnici as well as the Nazis. The propaganda that reached the United States stressed that Mihailović was doing nothing and only the Partisans were fighting the Axis forces. Since access to accurate reports was extremely hazardous, the communiques of the two Yugoslav units had to be evaluated by the American and British radio stations and relayed to the public as those stations saw fit. The Partisans gained the majority of supporters, according to many bitter critics of the Allied pro-Tito position, because of influential left-wing officials in the Western governments.⁴ However, Mihailović

³United States Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Yugoslav Communism: A Critical Study, ed. Charles Zalar (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 83.

⁴Ibid., p. 105.

never lost the strong backing of the Serbian population in the United States.

When the war in Europe ended, Mihailović was driven into hiding in the mountains of Bosnia where he eluded his Partisan pursuers for almost a year. While he hid in Yugoslavia, his followers were still active. Tito, upon assuming control of all Yugoslavia in April, 1945, sent Dr. Šubašić to San Francisco as the head of the Yugoslav delegation to the United Nations Conference. This delegation was challenged by Mihailović's Serbian-American followers--the Serbian National Federation of America--who presented to the conference a message from the General calling for United Nations backing for a coalition government in Yugoslavia.⁵ Šubašić's reply was that Mihailović would be tried and shot as a traitor because of his collaboration with the Germans.⁶ No move was made by the conference to seat the Mihailović backers.

It was not until March 13, 1946, that Tito's forces finally hunted down General Mihailović, finding him in a Bosnian cave with but eleven of his fellow Četnici from a force that numbered over 200,000 in the early days of the

⁵The New York Times, May 1, 1945, p. 13.

⁶Ibid., May 12, 1945, p. 7.

war.⁷ Within three months, Mihailović was in the midst of a trial for which the verdict had already been reached.

The United States initiated the exchange of many notes with Yugoslavia throughout the spring, most of which concerned two official Washington requests that American airmen who had been rescued by the Četnici be allowed to testify for Mihailović at the trial. The wartime Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States, Konstantin Fotić, claimed that there were some 520 airmen rescued. The Yugoslav Government answered the first American note by saying "no" to the testimony. They also denied that saving the airmen was an heroic and patriotic act, accusing Mihailović of doing so in the hope of gaining increased Allied aid.⁸ When the United States repeated its request, the Yugoslavs declined any official reply. To the press, General Aleksandar Ranković, the Yugoslav Minister of the Interior (and head of the Secret Police), accused the United States of attempting to interfere in Yugoslavia's internal affairs.⁹

Many groups, including former officials of the Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, the National Committee of

⁷Ibid., March 25, 1946, p. 1.

⁸Bulletin, Vol. XIV (1946), pp. 634 and 669.

⁹The New York Times, May 4, 1946, p. 4.

American Airmen to aid General Mihailović and the Serbian People, the Committee for a Fair Trial for Draža Mihailović, and a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee of the U. S. Congress, as well as numerous editorials called for a United Nations sponsored international tribunal to assure the world that General Mihailović would receive a fair and impartial trial. Such a trial, it was claimed, could not be expected under the Tito regime.¹⁰

The trial began on the tenth of June, 1946, and the judges found Draža Mihailović guilty as charged on July fifteenth. The General was executed by firing squad on the morning of July eighteenth.¹¹ Requests for clemency, coming from all over the world, were refused. The United States Department of State, however, made no move for clemency or to prevent the execution.¹² The Yugoslavs and the world have remained divided in their opinions of Mihailović's wartime actions. The evidence at his trial was overwhelming in its grounds for condemnation. Can it be believed?

¹⁰This claim is mentioned often in The New York Times (March 27, April 30, June 1, June 10, 1946).

¹¹Before his capture, Mihailović had refused American offers to aid his escape to Italy. Constantin Fotitch, The War We Lost (New York: Viking Press, 1948), p. 284.

¹²The New York Times, July 17, 1946, p. 2.

II. THE SHOOTDOWN

The postwar American Air Transport Service flights between Vienna and Rome were breathtaking on clear days. But on those days when the weather was perverse, these flights over the Carinthian Alps were very difficult and hazardous. The few available radio aids to navigation were often unreliable. The safest path was to cut across the northwest corner of Yugoslavia on a direct line between two flight check points: Klagenfurt, Austria, and Udine, Italy. There the mountain passes were not quite so high and visual reference to the ground was easier to obtain. The Yugoslav Government, after repeated instances of American planes using this shortcut through Yugoslavia, officially requested that the Americans desist from their intrusion upon Yugoslav sovereignty. The American pilots were duly cautioned to remain clear of Yugoslav territory.

On August 9, 1946, an American C-47 transport, either taking the shortcut or lost in the clouds, was forced down in a corn field near Ljubljana. Fortunately, only one passenger was injured. The occupants were taken to Belgrade and not allowed to contact the American Embassy.

This incident was a climax to a long series of incidents, each of which had increased the diplomatic tension between the United States and Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia

formally accused the United States and others of willful violation of sovereign Yugoslav airspace. The United States immediately blamed the incident on bad weather and the pitfalls of mountain flying.¹³

Despite American demands that the fliers be returned, no contact was made with the crew for over a week after the crash. The American Embassy was assured that the crew was alive and well. Yugoslavia claimed the plane was signaled to land; and when the pilot refused, the plane was forced down. Washington could not make any excuses until the pilot was allowed to tell his story.

On August 20, another American C-47 disappeared while enroute from Vienna to Udine. Radio transmissions indicated that the plane was being fired upon and finally shot down by Yugoslav planes and anti-aircraft guns. The bodies of the five American airmen were found five days later.

This time the Department of State was quick to accuse Yugoslavia of unwarranted action on the part of a supposedly friendly nation.¹⁴ The charges intimated that Tito was waging a war of nerves connected to the Trieste

¹³The New York Times, August 12, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁴Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 417.

negotiations then in progress.¹⁵ Tito answered by accusing the United States of sending whole squadrons of military planes over Yugoslavia.¹⁶ He further stated that in this particular case, the pilot, after crossing the border, ignored the interceptors' signals to land, a direct infringement of Yugoslavia's sovereignty; and, therefore, the Yugoslav fighters were acting in normal defense of their frontier.¹⁷

The American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, was in Paris for the peace negotiations at this time. He demanded to know the circumstances of the shooting and received what he considered a very unsatisfactory reply from the Yugoslavs. He immediately issued

instructions to notify the Yugoslavs that unless we received a satisfactory reply to our demands within forty-eight hours we would call upon the United Nations Security Council to take appropriate action.¹⁸

As the Department of State had declared that the United States considered the Yugoslav action to be a threat to world peace and no longer to be tolerated,¹⁹ and

¹⁵The New York Times, August 20, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁶James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 145.

¹⁷Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 418.

¹⁸Byrnes, op. cit., p. 145. For the United States note, see Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 418.

¹⁹The New York Times, August 22, 1946, p. 1.

had admitted that there were no effective sanctions that the United States itself might apply against Yugoslavia,²⁰ it seemed appropriate for the United States to turn to the U.N. Security Council for satisfaction. However, Tito reacted quickly by freeing the captive fliers. He also stated that he deplored the loss of lives and had now given instructions that no foreign planes were to be fired upon under any circumstances.²¹ To Secretary Byrnes, this was the essential part of a "satisfactory reply."²²

Despite the disillusioned protests of many Americans, the Department of State approached the two incidents realistically. On August 30, the Acting Secretary of State, William Clayton, announced that the United States would claim indemnity for the loss of life and damages sustained in the two air attacks.²³ The indemnity figure was subsequently set at an announced figure of less than \$400,000

²⁰Ibid., August 21, 1946, p. 2.

²¹Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 418.

²²Byrnes, op. cit., p. 145. Secretary Byrnes seemed convinced that the Russians had put significant pressure on the Yugoslavs to ease the great tension that pervaded the peace conference after the American ultimatum. Secretary Byrnes also admits that this incident turned him against any continuation of American assistance to UNRRA, ibid., p. 146.

²³Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 505.

and accepted by the Yugoslav Government.²⁴ Although the payments were slow in coming, official satisfaction had been accomplished.

Still, behind the provocative incidents lay the question of just why Tito had ordered the attacks. Tito claimed that the United States planes were, in reality, reconnoitering the Yugoslav moves in his zone of the Venezia Giulia area.²⁵ Eric Pridonoff denies that the attacks had any military significance, but believes they were "significant politically." According to Mr. Pridonoff:

Tito was demonstrating to his secret enemies throughout Yugoslavia, especially in pro-American democratic Serbia, that he was able to defy the one great democratic power in whom their hopes rested. If he could kill American fliers with impunity, how could democratic Yugoslavs expect succor from America?²⁶

The United States Congress had adjourned on August 3 that year, so there were no significant comments from that august body about how the Department of State should handle the diplomatic problems involved. Senators Connally and Vandenberg, however, were with Secretary of State Byrnes at the peace conference in Paris and were kept constantly

²⁴The New York Times, August 31, 1946, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., August 25, 1946, p. 1.

²⁶Eric L. Pridonoff, Tito's Yugoslavia (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955), pp. 236-237.

informed of the progress of the United States protests.²⁷ The incidents were handled firmly, and the form of the protest showed that the United States was anxious to use the newly-established organs of international security. American public opinion, on the other hand, was increasingly stirred when this unprovoked attack was added to the deep feeling generated by General Mihailović's trial and Yugoslavia's warlike behavior over Trieste.

III. TRIESTE

Trieste was once the principal port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its population was mainly Italian, while in the villages surrounding the port, the Slovenes predominated. The controversy between Italy and Yugoslavia over the Venezia Giulia and Trieste had its roots in many years of conflict before World War II. As the Partisans began their successful campaign to drive the Germans from Yugoslavia, Tito felt the time had arrived to claim the disputed area for good. The Partisans wanted to be the first in the area so that the right of conquest could be added to Yugoslavia's claims.²⁸ The Allied forces thwarted

²⁷ Secretary Byrnes was most appreciative of the bipartisan help provided by the two senators during the peace conferences. Byrnes, op. cit., pp. 234-235.

²⁸ At the same session of the AVNOJ in 1943, where Tito was proclaimed Marshal of Yugoslavia, the provisional

this plan by moving into the area at the same time as the Partisans, Yugoslavia considered her claim to annexation as internationally binding and the Allied forces as intruders.

May, 1945, was the most critical month because the United States was convinced that the settlement of the territory should only be by negotiation. Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew said:

. . . it was decided that the best way to avoid hasty and precarious territorial solutions in the Anglo-American theater of operations would be to establish and maintain an Allied Military Government in the disputed areas [northeastern frontier of Italy] pending settlement by the orderly processes to which the United Nations were pledged.²⁹

Because both the Americans and the British stood firm, and because Tito could not get the backing he expected from the Soviet Union, a provisional agreement was reached in June, 1945, dividing the Allied and Yugoslav armies by what came to be known as the "Morgan Line."³⁰

Numerous frontier incidents followed about which many diplomatic notes were exchanged; and by the summer of

parliament also solemnly declared the Venezia Giulia annexed to Yugoslavia. Hugh Seton-Watson, East European Revolution (London: Methuen and Company, 1952), p. 348.

²⁹Bulletin, Vol. XII (1945), p. 902.

³⁰Ibid., p. 1050. The Morgan Line was named after the British General Morgan who was chief of the Allied General Staff in the Mediterranean.

1946, actual troop clashes took place along the Morgan Line. To add to the confusion, the very strong Italian Communist Party, torn between wanting to belong to a communist state and desiring to stay in Italy, promoted strikes and demonstrations against the Allied control.

Secretary Byrnes felt that the Trieste settlement was one of the three essential issues faced at the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers during the summer of 1946.³¹ The leading figure among the United States delegates opposing the Yugoslavia takeover in Trieste seems to have been Senator Tom Connally. Senator Connally felt very strongly that the Trieste area should become the responsibility of the United Nations Security Council:

The territory of Trieste must not remain as a danger spot. It must not become the center of irritation and intrigue which may disturb the peace of the world. It must be absolutely independent. Its integrity and dignity must be secured. We are not here to serve the interests of Yugoslavia or the interests of Italy. Yugoslavia and Italy are both subordinate to the peace of the area and to the peace of the world.³²

The way out was found by following a suggestion of the French delegation and acclaiming Trieste a free territory. By the peace treaty with Italy, signed in February,

³¹Byrnes, op. cit., p. 147.

³²Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 571.

1947, the greater part of Venezia Giulia went to Yugoslavia. The United Nations Security Council assumed formal responsibility for the Free Territory of Trieste; but efforts of the Security Council to elect a governor failed because of the Russian veto. Most of the problems between Italy and Yugoslavia were left unsolved. The governor issue was considered critical by the Western Powers because that office was to represent the Security Council and have considerable powers to control the police, to maintain order, to declare a state of siege, and to protect human rights. The Russians preferred a governor with little authority. They also envisioned a Trieste with close ties to Yugoslavia. Secretary of State Byrnes objected to the Russian attitude by saying:

We were determined to do our utmost to protect the area from infiltration and similar tactics that would pave the way for a coup aimed at delivering Trieste to Yugoslavia, as Danzig had been delivered to Germany.³³

Robert Wolff claimed that the Yugoslavs were angry and frustrated not only because they were thwarted by the great power decisions in Trieste, but also because the Russians had not continued to support the Yugoslav claims to the very end.³⁴ Tito, according to Hamilton Fish

³³Byrnes, op. cit., p. 148.

³⁴Wolff, op. cit., p. 310.

Armstrong, had traveled to Moscow to ask Stalin whether he was willing to go to war to gain Trieste for Yugoslavia. Stalin's reproach for even suggesting such a plan was a humiliating setback for Tito.³⁵ Thus, another seed of discord appeared to disillusion the Yugoslavs.

The Yugoslav Government cooperated in the Trieste area only as much as was absolutely necessary because Yugoslavia was not strong enough to ignore the Western pressure. But peaceful settlement would not come to Venezia Giulia for many years; and the clash of troops and diplomatic notes of criticism would continue to keep the United States and Yugoslavia constantly at odds until the political atmosphere changed so dramatically in 1948.

IV. OTHER IRRITANTS

There were other causes of friction between the United States and Yugoslavia in those first years following World War II. One particular situation that received widespread publicity in the United States was the arrest and trial of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, for alleged collaboration with the Germans and the Yugoslav puppet government--the Ustaša. The trial

³⁵ Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Tito and Goliath (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 53.

during October, 1946, brought forth vehement protests from many church groups all over the world. Robert Wolff has said that the Tito regime found the strong public opinion aroused by Stepinac's sixteen years at hard labor sentence was a definite embarrassment to relations with the West.³⁶ The many requests from the American public to the Department of State to do something concrete about this denial of freedom of religion brought forth a very guarded reply from Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson:

It is the civil liberties aspect of the thing which causes us concern: aspects which raise questions as to whether the trial has any implications looking toward the impairment of freedom of religion and of worship; the aspects of it which indicate at least to the reporters who reported it from the spot that the actual conduct of the trial left a great deal to be desired.³⁷

This was the only official statement made by the United States Government. The United States apparently sought political expediency in circumventing this obvious internal Yugoslav conflict by all but ignoring Stepinac's plight. The Yugoslav Government sought Stepinac's condemnation as a definite political expediency.

The Archbishop became, to the outside world, a symbol of the invincibility of idealistic philosophy and of

³⁶Wolff, op. cit., p. 557.

³⁷Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 725.

Christian martyrdom. This the Yugoslav Government did not want. The Archbishop was later released because of illness and lived out his life in his native village of Krašić.

Another problem in United States-Yugoslav relations was the situation of American citizens in Yugoslavia. Following the war, there were from five hundred to twenty-five hundred United States citizens in Yugoslavia that, according to the Department of State, were being prevented from communicating with the American Embassy in Belgrade. In an exchange of diplomatic notes between the two governments, the United States accused Yugoslavia of: (1) in certain cases, depriving these American citizens of their identification papers; and (2) employing some U. S. nationals "at forced labor."³⁸ As no exact count of those affected was available, the Department of State appealed to the American populace of Yugoslav descent to report the names of any relatives or friends with American citizenship they knew who were being prevented from leaving Yugoslavia. The appeal and the diplomatic notes had minimal effect; some of those who were allowed to leave Yugoslavia were returned to the United States on empty UNRRA ships.³⁹

The Yugoslav Government also saw fit to close the

³⁸ Bulletin, Vol. XV (1946), p. 232.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 764.

United States Information Service in Belgrade in the fall of 1946. The Yugoslav charge was that the U.S.I.S. served to conduct a continuing campaign against the Yugoslav Government. Beyond this charge seems to have been a particular annoyance at the publication in Belgrade of a series of articles by the former economic specialist in the American Embassy in Yugoslavia, Eric Pridonoff. The articles, very critical of the Tito regime (as well as the handling of UNRRA supplies in Yugoslavia), had first appeared in the Los Angeles Examiner during the summer of 1946. The American Embassy denied complicity in the publication of the articles in Belgrade but could not deny Yugoslavia's request that the U.S.I.S. be closed. Ambassador Patterson expressed his regrets over the closing, saying: "It was a service and a mental refreshment which Yugoslavs wanted and are now denied." The United States made determined efforts to have the U.S.I.S. reopened but met with little success until 1948.

CHAPTER V

THE UNITED STATES AND THE COMINFORM BREAK

On June 28, 1948, the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) released the resolution of eight of its communist party members condemning the leaders of the "turkish terrorist regime" of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and expelling Yugoslavia from Cominform membership. Tito, Edvard Kardelj (the leading CPY theorist), Milovan Djilas (chief propagandist), and Ranković were accused of "pursuing an unfriendly policy toward the Soviet Union and the CPSU(B)," of "breaking with the Marxist theory of classes and class struggle," and of "revision the Marxist-Leninist teachings about the Party."¹

On the next day, Western newspapers filled their front pages with the Cominform charges and their own speculation as to how deep the apparent ideological problem and political rift would be. The news was so spectacular that it overshadowed the beginnings of American and British efforts to feed West Berlin by air--the Berlin Airlift. The Cominform's charges of Yugoslav pursuit of a hateful and slanderous policy toward the Soviet Union and leaning

¹The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute (Text of the Published Correspondence), "Cominform Communiqué" (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948), p. 62.

toward Western methods were generally interpreted as being related to the impact of the United States instigated Marshall Plan. The speculations were cautious in tone. The New York Times saw the Cominform action as no complete reversal of the Yugoslav position on essential domestic and foreign policies, but rather as "a split of historic importance in the Communist front."²

James Reston reported from Washington:

The tendency in the capital is not to make too much now of the Tito incident. What the incident has done, however, is to confirm a belief of the leaders of both parties that the policy of economic and political assistance to Western and Southern Europe, and of stern resistance to Soviet pressure is the right one and is showing results.³

On this, the first day after the news, Washington officials had nothing to say on the matter.

Some Western experts on Soviet affairs took it for granted that Moscow's authority would prevail. The Cominform resolution had called upon the "healthy elements" of the CPY "to compel their present leaders to recognize their mistakes openly and honestly and to rectify them," or, if they would not, "to replace them." It came as an even greater surprise then that the very next day the Yugoslavs threw a defiant reply back to the Cominform. It was

²The New York Times, June 29, 1948, p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 11.

generally concluded in the press that the issue was of great consequence and had the appearance of much more than a Party being chastized for a small deviation. In effect, the Yugoslav denial of any deviation was an announcement that Yugoslavia and the Cominform were through. Tito had broken with Russia.

Although the American public was taken by surprise by the news of the rift between the Soviets and their once most loyal followers, the declaration of the Cominform confirmed the suspicions of many observers of Yugoslav and Eastern European affairs. The Belgrade May Day parade, just two months before, was conspicuous because of the scarcity and the small size of the pictures of Stalin. In contrast, portraits of Tito were overwhelming in number and size. Five days later came the announcement that two of Tito's former ministers, Andrija Hebrang and Sretan Zujović, had been dismissed. As any changes in the ministry of such a government as Yugoslavia means some type of internal problems, the correspondents' curiosity was aroused.

The first indication of trouble that appeared in the American press was apparently in an article forwarded from London by Herbert L. Matthews the day before the public announcement by the Cominform. Mr. Matthews, in an offhand way while writing of the crisis over Berlin, said:

Incidentally there have been persistent rumors in London of dissension among the Communist leaders of the satellite countries and Moscow. Reports especially center on Yugoslav Premier Marshal Tito, who is said to be too independent for Moscow's satisfaction.⁴

The main source of these rumors turned out to be the June fifteenth issue of the Cominform organ "For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy," in which, without naming names, much criticism was laid to independent attitudes among certain satellite leaders.⁵

From the day of the announcement, there was some speculation as to whether American and British officials were really surprised at the communist split. One writer asked if it was not "legitimate to wonder if Marshal Tito has not already received promises of support whether he sought them or not."⁶ The only reaction that the Department of State would express was that they were watching developments very closely.⁷ This was quite an understatement.

The United States Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Cavendish W. Cannon, was not quite so discreet in his statement to

⁴The New York Times, June 27, 1948, p. 3.

⁵For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy [Belgrade], June 15, 1948.

⁶The New York Times, June 29, 1948, p. 9.

⁷Ibid., June 30, 1948, p. 3.

the press one week after the Cominform announcement. Ambassador Cannon had relieved Richard Patterson in the spring of 1947, so he had had a year to observe Yugoslavia and its foreign relations. The Ambassador was traveling in Italy on June 28 and found himself called to Washington shortly thereafter. On his way to Washington, he told the press: "We saw it was more or less coming; there was tension in the air and great excitement in the Communist Party and obvious friction with Moscow."⁸ On July 12, Ambassador Cannon was called in to brief President Truman. His only comments on the United States position after his meeting with the President were: "After all there is a communist regime in Yugoslavia in any case." Then he added: "The United States has a lot of friends among the people of Yugoslavia."⁹

The United States had already made one move toward easing the tension with Yugoslavia. On July 1, it was announced that the \$47,000,000 in gold which had been deposited for safekeeping by the Royal Yugoslav Government in the United States in 1941 was going to be released to Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Government, in return, was going to settle United States claims over private property,

⁸The New York Times, July 7, 1948, p. 5.

⁹Ibid., July 13, 1948, p. 18.

pre-UNRRA loans and other monetary problems between the two nations. American officials stressed, however, that the timing of the announcement had "no bearing whatever" on Yugoslavia's quarrel with Moscow.¹⁰

Yugoslavia, now more desperately in need of capital than ever, had been agitating for the return of the gold since 1945. The only answer the United States ever gave to Yugoslav requests was that the gold was being held in compensation for the American claims against Yugoslavia. On January 2, 1948, Yugoslavia had decided to put pressure on the United States by appealing to the forum of an appropriate agency of the United Nations. The Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States presented a note to the Department of State demanding the release of the gold:

Further delay in the unfreezing of these reserves, under whatever pretext, can be interpreted only as an intention to obstruct the economic reconstruction of Yugoslavia and to hinder her participation in the reconstruction of European economy, thus hampering the reconstruction of Europe in general.¹¹

The Ambassador added that the matter was being placed on the agenda of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The United States was rather doubtful that either the improvement or the deterioration of the Yugoslav

¹⁰The New York Times, July 1, 1948, p. 1.

¹¹Bulletin, Vol. XVIII (1948), p. 119.

economy could have a significant effect on the rest of Europe. But in calling upon ECOSOC, Yugoslavia touched a tender American nerve. Official American policy was to use the United Nations as much as possible to insure that international body's vitality. In so doing, the United States faced a variety of opinions not always amenable to the American position. Even though the United States delegates felt certain that ECOSOC's power was limited to an advisory capacity, the use of such a forum by the Yugoslavs could be detrimental to United States prestige. Secretary of State George C. Marshall refused to be intimidated by Yugoslavia's maneuver, deciding that Yugoslavia could not present a sufficiently strong case¹² (or gather sufficient strength among the membership of the Council).

The United States argument, when the matter was brought before the Council in February, 1948, was as expected. ECOSOC was not a court of appeal and, therefore, not a proper body to take up the item. Graciously, the United States added that it had no formal objection to the discussion of the Yugoslav gold.¹³ The Russian delegate suggested that the matter would more properly be brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but this

¹²Bulletin, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 117-118.

¹³The New York Times, February 3, 1948, p. 6.

suggestion received no support from either contesting state. On March 9, the Council, supporting the United States position, refused to consider the matter on procedural grounds.¹⁴

By the time of the ECOSOC refusal, Yugoslavia began to feel the strain of the mountain problems with the Soviet Union, and began serious negotiations with the U. S. State Department. The agreement was signed on July 19, just three weeks after the Cominform break. Again, the Department of State felt obliged to mention that the Yugoslav-Cominform quarrel had nothing to do with the settlement.¹⁵ This may very well be true, but the conflict between the two communist nations certainly eased the problem of negotiation for the United States. Yugoslavia was facing isolation and needed, if not friendship, at least a lessening degree of animosity.

It is ironic that the background and the official correspondence of the Soviet-Yugoslav dispute is more well-known than the initial attitude of the United States toward that dispute. Circumstances were such that Yugoslavia was anxious for the people to know the Russian charges in order to see how "inaccurate and unfounded" these assertions

¹⁴The New York Times, March 10, 1948, p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid., July 20, 1948, p. 1.

were, and to "prevent confusion amongst the masses in the country and in the international workers' movement."¹⁶

Therefore, almost all the correspondence, six of the eight known letters between the Central Committee of the CPY and the Central Committee of the CPSU, were published for all to read. This unexpected and bold reaction by Yugoslavia forced the U.S.S.R. to defend its charges through much deeper public analysis than the Soviets were accustomed.

The letters reveal that what started out to be a father-son lecture on personal habits that were unacceptable became an ideological harangue that the Soviets could not tolerate because it was not one sided.

Most observers, however, saw the rift as a truly personal antagonism between Stalin and Tito, rather than a nation-wide antagonism toward the USSR. The fact that Tito was a "self-made man" who had not been elevated to his position by Moscow, as had the other satellite leaders, had not endeared him to Stalin.¹⁷ When Tito and Kardelj included in their letter to the CPSU on April 13 that "no matter how much each of us loves the land of Socialism, the U.S.S.R., he can, in no case, love his country less," and "we are developing socialism in our country in somewhat

¹⁶The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁷The New York Times, June 30, 1948, p. 1.

different forms," Stalin countered with grave charges of nationalism.¹⁸ Since this same charge was leveled later at the Yugoslav leaders by the Cominform, Tito felt obliged to mention it in his June 29 reply to the Cominform resolution:

The CC of the CPY resolutely rejects the accusation that the CPY has passed on to positions of nationalism. By its entire internal and foreign policy, and especially by its struggle during the national liberation war and the proper solution of the national question in Yugoslavia, the CPY has given proof of the exact opposite.¹⁹

Tito's challenge to the Kremlin's ability to claim unique and universal authority forced Stalin to ostracize Yugoslavia as long as Tito remained in power.

Despite the many ideological aspects that the Soviet charges attest to, a very real issue was what Josef Korbel called "psychological":

Moscow failed to understand that Marshal Tito, Prime Minister of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, the Commander-in-Chief of the Yugoslav Army, Partisan leader, national hero and dictator, was a different person from Josep Broz, once underground agent of the Third International.²⁰

Stalin had attacked one of Yugoslavia's most precious belongings, its Army. The Partisans' arduous fighting had by

¹⁸The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute, op. cit., pp. 27, 52.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 78.

²⁰Josef Korbel, Tito's Communism (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951), p. 300.

now turned into a living legend. It is possible that the great pride of the Partisans had grown into actual conceit mixed with scorn for the achievements of the other communist parties in Europe. It may have been this same Partisan background and Partisan mentality more than nationalism, which triggered the Yugoslav defiance.

Stalin claimed that the Red Army had saved the Partisans from annihilation. Such a statement immediately assured Tito of the support of all those Partisans who might have been hesitating over the conflict. Stalin's statement was the climax to what Tito felt was a deliberate Soviet attempt to take command of the Yugoslav Army. Much of this was discussed in the exchange of letters. What was not discussed was the Yugoslav disgust with the actions of the Soviet Army from the day it swept into eastern Yugoslavia. According to Dr. Zalar, the Soviet troops behaved in exactly the same manner as they did in enemy territory. They displayed what he calls "the characteristics of a savage army; mass rapes, robberies, attacks on civilians, and other such acts."²¹ Later, as the Soviet troops withdrew from Yugoslavia, they "raped the countryside," absconding with livestock, machinery and agricultural

²¹U. S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Yugoslav Communism: A Critical Study (Charles Zalar, ed.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 163.

products.²² This behavior, in a fashion supposedly reserved for the enemy, caused acute embarrassment to Tito's Government and was, therefore, not given much publicity.

Tito was fully aware that this Soviet attitude assured him the support of the great majority of the Partisans. He knew that the Soviets were extremely unpopular among the non-communist element of the Yugoslav population. He felt secure, at least internally, in his position in opposition to the Cominform.

Tito's unwillingness to admit to the Soviet charges and his determination not to give in to Stalin were summed up in a nine-hour speech to the Fifth Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party in late July, 1948. Toward the end of the speech, Tito said:

In our foreign policy since the war we have gone hand in hand all the way with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union . . . loyalty and solidarity with the Soviet Union and all the other countries of people's democracy on foreign policy questions A terrible injustice is being done to us, that is to our country, when we are accused of isolating ourselves from the front of democracy.²³

In this same speech, Tito again denied the charges of nationalism. Indeed, his greatest claim to fame up to this

²²These charges are prominent in the writings of Eric Pridonoff, Tito's Yugoslavia, op. cit., pp. 46-47, and 52; and Josef Korb, Tito's Communism, op. cit., passim.

²³Tito, Selected Speeches and Articles (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1963), pp. 86-88.

time may well have been that he had been able to keep the divergent nationalities of Yugoslavia together. Few, if any countries, have faced the multiple nationality problem as well as has Yugoslavia under Tito.²⁴

As the final act of defiance to the Cominform, Tito, Kardelj, Djilas, and Ranković were all unanimously re-elected to the positions of leadership by the Congress. This act of unity within the CPY was a most convincing manifestation and was certainly not lost on Stalin. The path of resistance was set, and Yugoslavia was now obliged to follow it.

It has already been noted that the United States took little official notice of the ouster of Yugoslavia from the Cominform other than admitting to watching the evolution of this event very closely. Behind this usual

²⁴Contrary to the predominantly Serbian Četnici of General Mihailović, the Partisans were well representative of all the nationalities--including Serbian--of Yugoslavia. Tito himself was considered a Croat, being born of a Croat father and a Slovene mother. These two facts effectively complemented his natural talents for leadership; and combined with his much publicized role as the greatest hero of the Partisans, gave Yugoslavia the sort of leader necessary in such a heterogeneous nation. Despite the high esteem of his people, Tito was very cautious when the final act of Cominform drama was imminent. According to The New York Times (July 1, 1948, p. 1), Tito had made no public appearances after the May Day parade and left Belgrade for one of the Adriatic islands in mid-June. Once he was assured of unity in the CPY against the Cominform, he returned to Belgrade.

cautious facade, there was, in fact, great interest. Because all of the official American documents and information on this particular sequence of events are still classified, and will remain so for at least five more years, it is difficult to reconstruct just what did take place within official circles in Washington. The writer is forced, therefore, to resort to presumptions supported by subsequent events in attempting to recreate the actions and reactions of the United States.

The first presumption, and one fundamental to this thesis, is that the Department of State immediately recognized not only the reality and seriousness of the Yugoslav break, but also its very importance to the United States and the other Western nations. Because of the American posture in the cold war, the ouster of Tito, the first crack in the Soviet monolith, was of basic interest to the United States.

According to Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the first significant report of the trouble between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union to reach the Department of State was from our Embassy in Belgrade. Two weeks before the Cominform declaration, the American observers in Belgrade predicted what would happen from "stray facts and keen hunches." Two events in particular had caught the Embassy's eye: (1) contrary to previous years, Tito did not receive a

congratulatory birthday message from Stalin on May 25; and (2) a difference of opinion developed between the Soviet and Yugoslav Governments over the location of the Danube Conference scheduled for mid-summer.²⁵ The Embassy had also taken note of the other signs previously mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Mr. Armstrong added that when the Department of State checked this speculative report with the American Embassy in Moscow, it was "laughed off" because "the sense of Russian omnipotence was so strong that the idea of one of Stalin's satraps daring to defy him seemed ridiculous."²⁶ Nevertheless, the Embassy report from Belgrade can be considered a model of diplomatic reporting.

Just how the Department of State immediately evaluated the Belgrade Embassy report in the light of denials from Moscow may never be publicly known; nor is it known whether there were other reports that could convince the United States officials of the accuracy of the American Embassy's speculation. Yet the subsequent actions of the Department of State indicate that, once the break was affirmed by Tito's actions, the responsible officials felt

²⁵Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Tito and Goliath (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), pp. 88-89.

²⁶Ibid., p. 90.

that the break was genuine, that it could not be closed by any conceivable compromise as long as Stalin was alive, and that Tito would survive. This was in contrast to the many pessimists among the press and in other American Embassies.

One semi-official notice was taken of the rift within two weeks of the Cominform announcement. On the same day that Ambassador Cannon was called into conference with President Truman, the U. S. Government also released the text of a Voice of America broadcast which dealt with the Soviet-Yugoslav dispute. The broadcast, transmitted in every language of the Soviet bloc except Serbo-Croat, pointed out that the Soviet-dominated Cominform was trying to discipline Yugoslavia for perfecting the very techniques invented by the Soviet regime. The Voice of America said: "They [the Soviets] created a state so much in their own image that they found they could neither penetrate it nor control it, so they denounced it."²⁷

It can be presumed that President Truman took a deep interest in the dispute; and at a time when the Democratic Convention was taking place, a convention in which he faced a serious southern revolt. Truman's action in calling a conference to hear Ambassador Cannon's report, not just a

²⁷As quoted in The New York Times, July 13, 1948, p. 18.

brief visit as was customary with returning Ambassadors, indicates that the top officials were giving high priority to reassessing the American position in regard to Yugoslavia. Perhaps there was no significance, but on the day following this conference, the United States announced that the Free Territory of Trieste was being admitted to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in order to receive Marshall Plan aid. When queried whether the Yugoslav section of the Trieste area would receive this same aid, the OEEC officials admitted they had not even considered that aspect of the aid, and had no answer.²⁸

The question that remained was how could such an event as the dispute be advantageous to the United States? As the Department of State records of this period are classified, and as no responsible official has seen fit to mention this era in detail in his memoirs, all that remains is to speculate as to the considerations and the actions proposed by the Department of State in this situation.

The events of June 28 and 29, 1948 were not the usual type of events that officials in the Department of State had been considering since the end of World War II. In fact, these events were unique in the relations of the

²⁸The New York Times, July 14, 1948, p. 11.

Soviet Union to another communist state in Europe. The American approach had to be plotted with great care.

It is safe to assume that the relative importance of Tito's declaration of independence warranted the use of the Department of State's newest addition, the Policy Planning Staff.²⁹ By combining the expertise of that staff, at the time headed by George Kennan, the former Ambassador to Moscow, with the accumulative knowledge within the proper operating bureau, the European bureau, position and policy papers must have been prepared setting forth guidelines for use not only in regard to Yugoslavia, but also in dealing with any other Eastern European country that might follow Yugoslavia's revisionist example.

Drawing from the now-proven reports of the U. S. Embassy staff in Belgrade, the Policy Planning Staff and the European bureau were assured that this was a serious rift of profound implications. The next consideration would have been what effect would this rift have on the rest of the Soviet bloc. From the knowledge that was available, it could be presumed that Stalin would be forced to tighten the reins on the other communist parties--

²⁹The Policy Planning Staff had been created in 1947 as an integral part of the Department of State charged with developing positions on those important questions constantly plaguing U. S. foreign relations. It is now known as the Policy Planning Council.

parties who owed their position in power to Moscow. In effect, Tito was going to be isolated from the bloc. The very nature of the rift precluded any settlement, at least until one or the other of the antagonists--Tito or Stalin--was dead or removed from power.

The first conclusion then had to be that Tito's independent stand, a very real break from Russia, offered many advantages to the West. Yet, Tito's precarious position warranted caution and patience. As Robert Wolff said: "To leap too fast to embrace Tito might be to destroy him and the western opportunity together."³⁰ The Department of State must have constantly borne in mind that Tito's Yugoslavia was a communist state and was going to remain a communist state; and, therefore, Tito would brook no Western actions that smacked of attempted interference in internal affairs.³¹

As such an attitude ruled out political action, what significant advantage could the United States take of Tito's isolation and the blow to Soviet prestige? What should be America's objectives? The first objective, if

³⁰Wolff, op. cit., p. 410.

³¹In late July, 1948, Tito told a visiting former United States Governor that Yugoslavia would welcome a trade agreement with the United States provided it did not contain any political conditions. The New York Times, July 26, 1948, p. 5.

American interest was to benefit, had to be to aid Yugoslavia in maintaining her independence from Moscow, thus assuring an excellent and long-lasting reminder to Eastern Europe that the U.S.S.R. could be defied. The most effective method for this was through economic help. If the United States could work in the long run successfully to tie Yugoslavia to the world economy, Yugoslavia would be stabilized as a member of the Western economic system. Once this was accomplished, the planners certainly could foresee that a strong, independent Yugoslavia would mirror the possibilities of national independence to the satellite nations. Even considering the stranglehold that Stalin had on Eastern Europe, time and economic growth could surely rekindle nationalistic thoughts in those countries.

Another and key consideration was the strategic significance of Yugoslavia's newly-independent position. The annunciation of the Truman Doctrine in the spring of 1947 had provoked violent words from Marshal Tito. He referred to it as an obvious act of "American intervention." According to Tito, the American policy could not alter Yugoslavia's foreign policy in any way. Tito explained: "One reason is the visible American intervention in the home policy of these two countries [Greece and Turkey],

particularly in Greece."³² Now Yugoslavia was facing economic disaster through isolation, for Stalin had convinced the remaining Cominform members to break relations with Yugoslavia. There also followed a great purge of the communist ranks in these countries for the purpose of eliminating "Titoism." Tito's first overture to the West, and in particular to the United States, was to promise that Yugoslavia would no longer aid the Greek guerrillas in their battle against the U. S.-supported Greek Government. Even considering that Yugoslavia could no longer afford to support and harbor the guerrillas, this was a meaningful concession to Tito's political doctrine.

Since the loss of Czechoslovakia into the Russian sphere not too many months before, the main American concern in Europe was the containment of the communist progress and commencement of a long-continuing effort against Soviet imperialism in behalf of the independence of the Eastern European states. Yugoslavia could become a key factor in that overall European plan. With Yugoslavia's independence came the lessening of pressure on France and Italy, and more especially on Greece. But political caution was necessary. The Department of State planners had

³²As quoted by The New York Times, April 27, 1947, p. 34.

to concede that any kind of political intrusion in Yugoslavia might upset the delicate balance caused by the split and at the same time alienate Tito and strengthen Stalin.

Certainly, there was not going to be any internal collapse in Yugoslavia if Tito's state could survive economically. Tito's popularity and the exhilaration of standing up to the Russian Bear served to unite the Yugoslav populace despite the predominance of anti-communist feeling. Regardless of the fact that economic aid to Yugoslavia would serve to strengthen Tito, that aid had to be made available.

Two obstacles remained that the Department of State had to consider: the touchy American domestic attitude toward Tito and the Yugoslav Government; and the effects of that attitude on congressional support for a new Yugoslav policy--support that was necessary to supply the economic assistance. The confrontations between Yugoslav and American troops in Trieste, the trials of Mihailović and Archbishop Stepinac, the loss of American planes and lives to Yugoslav fighter planes, and the diplomatic difficulties caused by Yugoslavia were all fresh in the American public's mind. Therefore, an expertly-planned presentation program had to be developed to show Congress the immense importance of a Yugoslavia independent of Russia. We know that the Department of State's initial aid proposals received the

support of Congress, but in view of the continuing hostility of segments of the American public to Communist Yugoslavia, even though independent, there remained a problem for the President and the Department of State during the ensuing years to maintain continuing support in Congress of aid programs for Yugoslavia.

The policies and programs developed by the Department of State for supporting the independence of Yugoslavia were based on realistic considerations of political interest. The Department of State clearly recognized the splendid opportunity made available by Tito's break with Stalin and the Cominform. Here was a chance to strike at Soviet imperialism in Europe and to begin the process of working in an effective way though slowly--by helping to make Tito's heresy of a national communist and independent state influential among the Eastern European countries of the bloc--for the ultimate independence of Eastern Europe. That opportunity was not going to be missed.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: THE UNITED STATES BEGINS

AID TO YUGOSLAVIA

The position could be taken that both the communist camp and the Western camp wanted and needed Yugoslavia. Of all the Russian satellite nations at this time, Yugoslavia was in the best possible position to assist any grandiose expansion plans that Stalin might have harbored. Bordering upon both Italy and Austria, and with easy access to France through Italy, Yugoslavia offered the U.S.S.R. a springboard, if the proper moment came, to assist the large Italian and French communist parties. From the speeches of Yugoslavia's leaders, it was obvious that they all wanted back into the communist fold. But they never wavered from their demands to return on their own terms. They never once offered to bargain with the Kremlin. Stalin could not afford to give in to the Yugoslavs in any way, even for strategic reasons.

This impasse was what had assured the West that Yugoslavia would need assistance. Even though the British were the first to complete a trade agreement with Yugoslavia, it was not reciprocal trade that Yugoslavia needed most. The only country in the world that had what Tito really needed was the United States. That need was long

term credit that could eventually be turned into an outright gift.

There is yet no way of knowing just when United States officials informed Yugoslavia that aid might be available if requested. Certainly, no definite promise could have been made by the Department of State before the matter was approved by the President's National Security Council and the way paved in Congress. I suspect, though, that within a short time following the break with the Cominform Tito knew that the United States was most willing to talk about economic assistance.

Tito, for his part, had to be careful of the way he approached the West. Although he was assured the support of the fellow communists in Yugoslavia against Stalin, he did not know what the CPY's reaction would be to a possible embrace of the American imperialists. This is probably why Yugoslavia concluded her first trade agreement in the West with Great Britain.

By the time the spring of 1949 arrived, Yugoslavia was living on the brink of economic and political isolation. Such an existence had so slowed the rate of development that Yugoslavia was faced with possible reversion to a chaos reminiscent of the recent war. The small trade agreement with Great Britain was so minimal as to be no help other than initiating the opening to the West. As it

was obvious to the CPY that there was no chance of regaining Soviet help, Tito turned to the United States and requested that Yugoslavia be considered for economic assistance. Aware of the doctrinal implications of such a move, Tito blustered that he would allow no political concessions to the Americans. The Department of State most probably interpreted this as meant for consumption within the CPY itself rather than a threat to the United States.

In Washington, Tito's request was given the full treatment as a serious foreign policy decision. The problem was placed before the National Security Council for appraisal and deliberation. As the Policy Planning Council of the Department of State had already completed a position paper on Yugoslavia, it is safe to assume that this paper was used as the basis for the Security Council decision to grant aid to Yugoslavia. Congressional leaders were necessarily kept advised, and agreed on the importance of supporting Yugoslavia's independence. All that remained was explaining the decision to the American people and to America's allies. The allies accepted the decision as part of great power politics; but the American public has never been convinced of the wisdom of such a decision. Nevertheless, U. S. economic aid to Yugoslavia began in late 1949.

The decision to offer economic assistance to a communist country was so sharp a deviation from past American

policy that its importance cannot be overemphasized. It has influenced and been a model for American foreign policy toward all the Eastern European countries. Poland was a later recipient of benefits from this policy; and today Rumania and any other Eastern European country showing definite signs of seeking national independence is eligible. Unfortunately, the Administration's attempts to encourage such an independent status are frustrated by a Congress who obviously does not grasp the great significance of such a posture.

The aid to Yugoslavia has been termed extravagant by some critics; but it certainly was never intended to be more than just enough to establish the Yugoslav economy and help maintain Yugoslavia's independence from the Soviet Union.

The greatest criticism of the assistance to Yugoslavia has come from Congress. Although the two houses of Congress provided enough foreign aid funds to keep the Yugoslav policy alive, threats to cancel Yugoslavia's "most favored nation" status have constantly bothered Department of State officials. Since these critics are supposed to be echoing the concern of their constituents, the only conclusion is that the Department of State has not managed to convince the public of the soundness of the Yugoslav policy.

The Yugoslav theoretician, Edvard Kardelj, expressed the Yugoslav attitude toward American aid when he said:

Jugoslavia will therefore strive to maintain such relations with the United States regardless of whether she receives American aid or not. Such assistance has been of great help to the Yugoslav people and they value it highly; it has never been, however, nor will it ever be, the main consideration governing our country's relations with the United States.¹

This same attitude has prevailed among the various American officials who have been responsible for the Yugoslav policy. The policy itself has been marked with consistency regardless of Democratic or Republic administrations. And it has constantly flowed beneath the surface in the volatile East-West relations of the past twenty years.

Certainly, the United States recognized the pitfalls of combating communist economic policies, and fully expected to exploit eventually the advantages that would accrue in eroding the structural formation of Marxist economic doctrine. The growth of closer contacts and the increasingly free flow of ideas and people between Yugoslavia and the West have in themselves been worth the efforts; and they stand as proof of the foresight of those Department of State officials who were responsible for developing what stands today as our most successful foreign

¹Edvard Kardelj, "Evolution in Yugoslavia," Foreign Affairs, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 (October, 1956).

policy since the advance of communism. The only blot against the pursuit of this policy has been the inability of the Executive Department of the United States to convince the American public of the inherent soundness of the policy. It is regretful that such a brilliant plan that contributed so much to the containment of communist advances in Europe has never received public acclaim.

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